



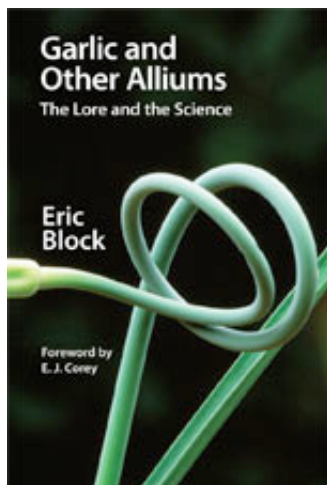
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Gardening Answers Knowledgebase

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Garden Tool



Garlic and Other Alliums: The Lore and the Science by Eric Block, Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, UK 2010

The genus *Allium* covers onions, garlic, leeks, chives and others. Their pungent odor comes from sulfur compounds they contain. Dr. Eric Block is a professor at New York State University at Albany, and has spent over 35 years studying the chemistry of alliums. His book covers an enormous range of information on the genus *Allium*. The "Lore" portions are fascinating, with references to archaeology, literature, painting, folk medicine, cultivation, and more. The "Science: parts are - well - scientific. For those who would like to explore the phytochemistry of alliums and its sulfur components, the long chapter on these topics is comprehensive.

For the rest of us, browsing the other chapters one can discover a 1600-1700 BCE recipe for braised turnips containing onions, turnips, and garlic and leek juice. *Allium* references in literature range from the Bible to Shakespeare to Rudyard Kipling. There is a whole chapter on folk medicine, both its uses and some cautions, such as this one: alliums including onion, garlic, leeks and chives are toxic to cats, dogs and monkeys.

For further information see: Dr. Eric Block's [page](#) on NYU Albany site and Harold McGee's [article](#) in the New York Times June 10, 2010

Reviewed by former Miller Librarian Lyn Sauter

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