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POTATOES

How to Plant

Cut potatoes into 1 ½" square pieces, making sure that each piece has at least two good eyes. Cut a few days before planting to allow cut surfaces to heal slightly. Dip pieces in fungicide to prevent rot. Set pieces, cut side down, eyes up, about 4" deep and 12" apart in rows at least 2 feet apart. Ten pounds of potatoes should plant 100 feet of rows and yield about 1 ½ bushels at harvest. Fertilize, but not too much, using low nitrogen fertilizer. Do not allow fertilizer to touch the seed pieces. Keep well-watered. When plants are 6" high, mound up the soil to form a hill and mulch around the growing stems. Potatoes exposed to light turn green, an effect associated with the naturally-occurring poison, solanine. Small amounts of green tissue can be scraped away, but excessively green potatoes should be discarded.

Harvesting

Pull "new" potatoes as soon as the vines flower. They will be smaller and tenderer, but will not store. They can, however, be canned. For full-sized potatoes, wait until the vines yellow or die back, then simply and very carefully turn the soil over and rake soil away to expose tubers. To store potatoes, place in a dark area at 50F to 60F for about 2 weeks in a humid atmosphere to cure. Then, store potatoes as close to 40F as possible. Potatoes stored at 50F will begin to sprout and, stored below freezing, they will rot.

Recommended Varieties

Norland- (90-110 days) Widely-adapted red potato, one of the most favored by home gardeners. Very early, medium-size tubers that can be used many ways.

Kennebec- (110-140 days) White-skinned, block shaped, excellent eating quality. One of the best for frying and hash browns. Stores moderately well.

Red Pontiac- (110-140 days) Red-skinned, widely adapted, oval tubers that may become too big with abundant rainfall. Fair table quality, very good storage quality.

Yukon Gold- Large round versatile tubers retains its yellow flesh color when baked, boiled or fried. Medium to high yielding, excellent storability.

Superior- Excellent early/midseason variety. Superb flavor for boiling or baking. Good for long term storage, resistant to heat, drought and scab.