

Potatoes are Easy to Grow!

Love the
Food
You Eat!

Growing Potatoes

A nutritional mother lode, potatoes are easy to grow as long as they have full sun, moderate temperatures, and light, rich, acidic, well-drained soil. Colors range from purple, red, pink, gold and yellow, in addition to the usual white. Potato varieties have a range of subtle flavors, too. Choose from huge baking potatoes to tiny fingerlings that bake or microwave quickly. Try varieties with colors, shapes and flavors you won't find at the supermarket.



When & How to Plant: Grown from seed potatoes—tubers grown in the previous season. Sprouts from seed potatoes should emerge in 2 to 4 weeks depending on soil temperature. Potatoes perform best where summers are cool, but are widely adapted. Cut seed potatoes that are larger than a chicken egg into pieces about 1 inch across or slightly larger. Each piece should have at least one “eye” (the bud where the stem will grow from)—preferably two eyes. Egg-sized and smaller tubers can be planted whole.

Plant about 2 to 4 weeks before our last frost date. The soil temperature should be at least 40 degrees. Do not plant where you've grown potatoes, tomatoes, peppers or eggplant in the past two years.

One common way to plant potatoes is to dig a shallow trench about 4 inches deep with a hoe. Place the seed potato pieces with their eyes up about 8 to 12 inches apart in the trench, and replace the soil. Space trenches about 2 to 3 feet apart. Stems and foliage should emerge in about 2 to 4 weeks depending on the soil temperature.

Spread your harvest by choosing early (ready to harvest in about 65 days), mid-season (80 days) and late (more than 90 days) varieties.

Maintenance & Care: When plants are about 6 to 8 inches tall, “hill” the potatoes by hoeing soil loosely around the base of the plants within about an inch of the lower leaves from both sides of the row. Repeat in about 2 to 3 weeks. You may want to make additional hillings, gradually building a 6 to 8 inch ridge down the row. Hilling keeps the developing potatoes from being exposed to sun, which turns them green and bitter. Green potatoes contain a chemical, solanine, which is toxic in large amounts.



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Preferred Sunlight: Full Sun

Preferred Soil Conditions: Prefers well-drained, light, deep, loose soil, high in organic matter. Unlike most vegetables, potatoes perform best in acid soil with pH 4.8-5.5. Needs plentiful, consistent moisture. They will rot under prolonged cold, wet conditions. If your soil is poorly drained or a heavy clay, consider using raised beds. Adding organic matter (compost, cover crops, well-rotted manure or leaves) is a good way to improve soil before growing potatoes. Go easy on organic matter sources high in nitrogen (such as manure) and nitrogen fertilizer as too much nitrogen can encourage lush foliage at the expense of tuber production.

Varieties recommended for New York State:

Early:

Dark Red Norland
Superior

Mid Season:

Chieftain– red, high yielding, large
Reba
Salem
Yukon Gold

Late Season:

Elba
Katahdin

Specialty:

Adirondack Blue
Adirondack Red.
French Fingerling
German Butterball

Source:

**Cornell University, Home Gardening, Vegetable Growing Guides.
For a complete Growing Guide and additional information visit.**

www.gardening.cornell.edu



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