

Putting Sweet Potatoes In Garden

“Set” plants as soon as possible after you receive them and the ideal time is late in the afternoon after the hot sun has gone to bed. Try to avoid “setting” plants when you have a wind, especially from the North. Hold your plants until the following day and the results will be much better.

If there is to be a delay in planting, just remove the plants from the carton and take the rubber band, waxed paper and moss away from the plant roots. The moss may be quite dry as the moisture has been removed from the moss while traveling to you. Then place the roots in a position where they can receive moisture being careful to keep the plants away from the sun and wind. Do not wet the stem or leaves. Roots placed on wet sawdust or moss or on a wet burlap bag will keep the plants strong and healthy for several days. Plants will succeed even if they are yellow, slimy and have an odor that is almost unbearable. Potato Plants are tough and strong and most of them will survive if they are set properly and have a good growing climate.



Planting or “Setting”



Garden rows should be about 3 feet apart and the row itself about 8 to 12 inches high ... the higher the row the more space for the potato to develop. Plants should be set 10 to 18 inches apart. Even spaced rows and plants will produce a more uniformly-sized potato. A “peg”, shovel, stick or transplanter can be used to set your plants. Place the roots well in the ground but do not cover the “bud”. Pour a little water in the plant hole around the roots and then “firm up” the soil. In case frost or unexpected cool move in, protect your plants with a light cover.

Cultivation and Maturity

Keep the soil worked to a fairly “loose” condition and “hoe” or pull out the undesired vegetation. Once the plants get started, the plant growth will smother out most grass and weeds. Maximum maturity is hard to determine as some people like a small potato which they call a “baby baker.” Others desire the potato to grow to its largest or “jumbo” size. Simply examine an average hill and dig the potatoes when they approach the size that you desire.

NUTRITIOUS “HOMEGROWNS” FOR YOUR FAMILY

Optional Black Plastic Method

Many folks in our northern states have been growing sweet potatoes for years. Now, new Quick-maturing varieties along with new gardening techniques that have been tested for several years in the New England states have helped the harvest almost double. These yields nearly matched those from Louisiana, Georgia and North Carolina, which are traditional sweet potato states.

Prepare a large ridge around 12 inches high and make a furrow about 2 inches deep in the middle of the ridge and cover with black plastic. This can be done 2 weeks before planting time and the dirt will be warmed and your plants will begin to grow immediately after they are put in the ridge. The large ridge of loosely worked dirt helps the potatoes grow large and smooth. A regular garden hoe and a little work can prepare a ridge that will be a good growing place for your sweet potatoes.

When you are ready to plant your potatoes (late afternoon if possible), use a knife to make a small slit in the plastic. Slits every 12 inches will be about the right distance to put plants to produce average size potatoes. If larger potatoes are desired, the slits should be 15 to 18 inches apart. Beginning gardeners should use all 3 spacings to determine the best spacing for future plantings. Put the roots of each plant in a peg hole made under each slit and put about a cup of water around the roots. Then use your hand to “firm up” the dirt around the roots. Protection is needed when unseasonable cool is expected.

Gardeners in the south to mid-section of the country may want to remove the black plastic about a month after planting.

The use of fertilizer is your choice. Most gardens are fertile enough to produce lots of sweet potatoes with no fertilizer at all. It is suggested that you fertilize only part of your row and then you can compare yield and taste.

Tasty - Sweet - Delicious