



HOW TO PLANT POTATOES

YIELD: A good yield of potatoes will be 50 to 75 pounds of usable tubers from 100 feet of row.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS: A well-drained fine, sandy, loam soil that is high in organic matter is preferred.

SEEDBED PREP: After tilling, level the surface slightly so that furrows can be made. Make trenches 6-8 inches deep and 3 feet apart.

SOIL PH AND FERTILIZER: Liberal amounts of fertilizer are required for large yields. The fertilizer should be placed in continuous bands of 2-3 inches to each side and slightly below the seed piece. However, it can be broadcast before plowing or spading. A typical rate would be 25 to 30 pounds of 8-16-16, 10-20-20, or equivalent per 1,000 sq. ft. When plants are 4 to 6 inches tall, band 2 to 3 pounds of fertilizer per 100 feet of row about 6 to 10 inches from the row if growth is not satisfactory and if foliage is yellowish-green. Ph should range between 5-7.

PLANTING: Allow potatoes to warm up to room temperature. When they have sprouts 1/4 to 1/2 inches long, cut into chunks with each piece having at least 2 buds. (A good rule of thumb is that the potato is smaller than a golf ball, plant it whole with eye pointing up.) Let dry out 2-3 days. Place potato cut side down with eye pointing upward, about 12-15 inches apart, rows 3 feet apart. Cultivation should be shallow and frequent enough to control weeds. When potato shoots reach 10-12 inches, hill the soil from between rows and mound up against plants, burying stems half way. Ridging is necessary to prevent greening of shallow tubers.



HARVESTING: Harvest when leaves begin to yellow and foliage die back. Leave in ground at that point for 2-3 weeks to toughen up skins. Then put into dark storage. Potatoes exposed to sunshine will turn green and may rot. To store for several months, the tubers should be cured in a dark place at 60 to 65 degrees F and humidity of 85% or higher for 10 days. After tubers are cured, keep them in a cool (40-45 degrees F), dark place with high humidity.



INSECT AND DISEASE CONTROL: A prevention program of spraying or dusting can start as soon as the plants emerge and continue until late summer or a few weeks before harvest. Flea beetles, leaf hoppers, aphids, and potato beetles are the major insects affecting leaves and stems. Early blight and late blight are the major foliage diseases. Use recommended insecticide-fungicide combinations for potatoes.



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