

Potato

2 lbs. of seed potatoes can give you 50 lbs. of potatoes for eating. Use 1 lb. of cut up seed pieces for an 8-10' row, spaced 1' apart.

- PREPARING SEED:** Tubers the size of hen eggs are highly desirable & should be planted whole. Large tubers should be cut up into pieces weighing 2-4 ounces and containing two or more strong eyes. Use a clean, sharp knife to cut seed pieces. Let seed "heal over" for no more than 24 hrs. but do not let them dry out. Spread cut pieces out on a table in the shade. Use a teaspoon or two of powdered sulfur in a paper sack to gently toss potatoes in. This can help guard against fungus & bacteria.
- PLANTING:** Plant when soil temperatures are between 55° to 70°F or 2 weeks before last frost date. Plant seed potatoes 4-6" deep, 12" apart, in rows 12-24" apart. If soils are heavy, plant 2-3" deep and cover with 2-3" of mulch.
- CULTURE:** Full sun. Deep, light, loose, humus-rich, slightly acid soil is best. Potatoes do need water on a regular basis to produce a good yield.
- HILLING:** Hilling is crucial to growing many large potatoes. Sprouts will emerge in about 2 weeks from planting. When the stems are about 8" high, gently hill the vines with soil from both sides of the row. Leave about 4" of the vine exposed. Repeat hilling process in 2-3 weeks and again in 2 weeks. On subsequent hillings add only an inch or two of soil to the hill.
- FERTILIZING:** After emergence and until blooming ends, foliar spraying every two weeks with fish emulsion &/or liquid seaweed extract is recommended. Spray in the morning while it's still cool and the dew lingers on the leaves. No need to fertilize once the vines are in full bloom.
- HARVESTING & PRUNING:** Breaking or cutting off vines when tubers are mature is the best method. Leave potatoes in the hill for about 2 weeks after vines have died down. This allows time for skins to "set", which increases storage ability.
- STORAGE:** Potatoes keep best in the dark at 36° to 40°F, with enough humidity so they don't dry out, and given enough air circulation so they can respire. Light or warmth promote sprouting and will turn potatoes green. But, cold potatoes bruise easily so handle them gently in storage.
- CAUTION:** Supermarket potatoes are almost always treated with a sprouting inhibitor which retards shoot growth, resulting in a low yield. Organic potatoes are untreated but may carry diseases that will put you at risk of infecting your other potatoes or those of your neighbors.