



J&L Garden Center

*The All Season Gift
and Garden Center*

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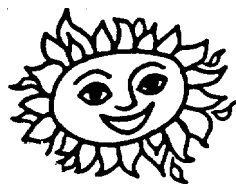
Potato Pointers

Potatoes, a cousin of the tomato, are native to South America. Potatoes were so well liked by the early spanish explorers that they were taken back to Europe where they became very popular and became an important food crop for the entire continent. Potatoes were so important that when Ireland's potato crop was destroyed by **Late Blight**, thousands of people starved to death. Later, potatoes were introduced back into the United States where they have become a very popular and important vegetable crop.



Planting Potatoes

Potatoes can be an easy and rewarding vegetable crop in your home garden, if you care for them properly. Each plant requires up to four square feet and can produce up to ten pounds of potatoes for every one pound of potatoes you plant. Plant your potatoes between mid-March and mid-July. If you plan to store your potatoes for winter use, plant them later than you would plant



them for summer use. Potatoes grow best in light, sandy soil. They do not like heavy soil or soil that stays wet. Potatoes that are grown in heavy soil are usually deformed, stunted and sometimes do not produce tubers at all. Potatoes need full sun to produce their largest yield.

They will grow in partial sun if they are not kept too wet. You will not get a large harvest in the shade.

Prepare your garden soil by adding one inch of mulch and applying one pound of **16-16-8 Multi-Purpose Fertilizer** per one hundred square feet. Rototill your garden six to twelve inches deep. Do not add a lot of fresh manure to potato gardens or you may cause more harm than good. Fresh manure may add maggots to the soil, which love to eat growing potatoes. Too much fresh manure may rob fertilizer from the plant and may cause the potato to turn black on the inside. This internal black spot is not a disease, it is a physiological disorder caused by stress or physical injury.

Cut your potatoes into pieces. Each piece should have at least two or three "eyes". Dust the pieces with either **Sulphur or Bonide Garden Dust** and let them sit twelve to twenty four hours in a cool dry area. Letting the cut pieces



sit and dry out helps the fresh cut areas harden, so they will be less likely to rot in the ground.

Plant your seed potatoes four to six inches deep and eighteen inches apart. Space your rows two or three feet apart so your plants will have room to grow and you will be able to mound dirt around the potato plants during the summer. Cover your potatoes and water them thoroughly.

Watering Potatoes

Do not water potatoes, after planting, until the plants are at least five inches tall. The soil usually has plenty of moisture until mid-June or even early-July. Too much water during this time will make the potatoes rot in the ground. Many potato growers do not water until the potato plants show signs of wilting. Once you start watering potatoes you need to maintain an even watering schedule the rest of the summer. Irregular watering causes the plants to start and stop growing, making them grow in unusual shapes and sizes. The tubers may form little knobs on the outside edges. Dry conditions may also make the potatoes turn black inside. This blackness is called **Internal Black Spot**. It is not a disease, it is a sign of physical stress, similar to **Blossom End Rot** of Tomatoes. Black Spot is a common problem of potatoes. This condition doesn't usually show up until after harvest and storage. The unaffected part of the potato is still edible.



Fertilizing Potatoes

Potatoes need a lot of fertilizer each year. After mixing **16-16-8 Multi-Purpose Fertilizer** in the soil before planting, give them a little **16-16-8 Multi-Purpose Fertilizer** every four to six weeks during the summer. Continue fertilizing them until mid-Au-

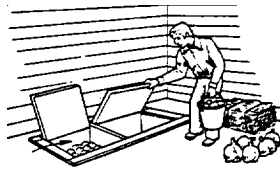


gust. Potatoes form tubers on the stems between the seed and the leaves. To help the potatoes form more tubers, cover the stems with soil during the summer. Mound soil around the stems regularly during the summer. Be careful not to cover the entire plant. Straw may be used instead of soil to cover the plants. The more you are able to “hill” the plants the more potatoes you will harvest. Do not dig right next to the plant or you may damage the root system and stunt it’s growth.



Harvesting Potatoes

Potatoes are usually ready to start harvesting when the blossoms appear on the plant, usually 70 to 90 days for the early varieties. Harvest the larger potatoes and leave the smaller tubers to continue to develop. Be careful not to damage the root system so the plants will continue to grow.



Potatoes need to mature before harvesting them for storage. Wait until the plants have died down (120 days). Let the potatoes stay in the ground one to two weeks and then dig them. This time period allows the skin to thicken and the tubers to mature for storage. Do not allow them to freeze or the potatoes will not store properly. After digging, let the potatoes dry one or two days before washing them for storage. Store only firm, healthy potatoes. Eat the damaged ones first. Store potatoes in total darkness between 40 and 50 degrees until you are ready to use them. Do not eat potatoes that have turned green: either when you first harvest them from the garden or when you take them from storage. Always discard green potatoes; they are poisonous and may make you sick.

Insects and Diseases

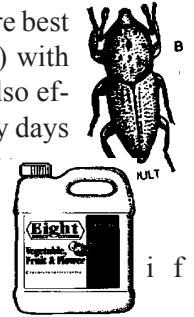
Internal Black Spot causes the inside of the potato to have a large black area, usually in the center of the potato. This is a physiological problem, not a disease. Extreme summer heat and dry soil conditions usually causes this problem. Bruising during harvest can also cause this black spot to occur. Potatoes with this problem do not spread it, nor does it make the potato rotten. Eat the unaffected portion of the potato, it is still edible, just not very appetizing.

Late Blight This disease causes the plant to die suddenly; late in the growing season. The affected plant has leaves with brown rings that eventually turn yellow and die. Keeping water off the leaves and fertilizing regularly is the best prevention for this disease. This disease is caused by a fungus. Spraying



with a fungicide such as daconil, or zineb will also prevent this disease. By the time this disease appears it is usually too late to cure.

Aphids and Beetles These insects are best controlled by either spraying (or dusting) with Sevin, Eight or Malathion. Diazinon is also effective but should not be used within thirty days of harvest. Spray the leaves thoroughly (top and bottom) at regular intervals. Potatoes also have other insect and disease problems, please ask one of our sales clerks if you have other questions about your potato plants.



Potato Varieties

Russet Burbank This is the most famous potato, the Idaho Baker. It is great to cook with; fried, mashed or baked. The Russet Burbank is an oblong shaped, brown skinned potato. It’s vine is 30"-36" tall. It stores well during the winter and does not bruise easily. Does not grow well in extremely hot areas. Approximately 120 day maturing.

Norgold Russet This is an early maturing russet potato. It is smooth, round and has a brown skin. It too is great for all types of cooking. It has a small plant, about 20 inches tall. Approximately 80 day maturing.

Cal White (Kennebec) This potato is an excellent white potato. It has a thick, light brown skin. This potato has a large plant and is very easy to grow. The leaves are large so it is fun to watch grow. Very shallow eyes. Approximately 100 day maturing.

Red Pontiac This is the easiest potato to grow. It has a large plant and you can almost watch it grow. It is a large, round, red potato with deep eyes. It stores well and grows great in this area. Approximately 100 days maturing.

Red Norland This is the earliest potato. It has a small plant and does not grow well in wet areas. It has a smooth, round, red skin with shallow eyes. Good for potato salads. Stores well. Approximately 70 days maturing.

Red LaSoda This variety has a large plant and is easy to grow. It produces well and cooks well. It has a dark red skin and has deep eyes. The tubers are almost round. Approximately 110 days maturing.

All Blue This potato plant has a blue cast. It has blue blossoms and the tuber is blue. This is a real novelty and conversation piece. It has a unique flavor. Approximately 120 days to maturity.

Yukon Gold This potato has an attractive, smooth, thin, yellow skin. It has shallow eyes and a pale-yellow flesh. It is great for all types of cooking. It keeps well. Approximately 110 days maturing.