

## Potatoes!

Very easy to grow. Potatoes fresh from the garden are sweet and flavorful--the sugar hasn't all converted to starch as with store-bought ones.

- Cut each potato into 3 - 4 pieces, each with its own 'eye'.
- Let the cut pieces sit for a day or two so the cut edges scar over. Plant 2 - 3" deep, a foot or so apart, in soil that has been amended with compost, but don't add high-nitrogen fertilizer or large amounts of manure.
- Water regularly-- 1 - 2x/week.
- Plants will grow to 1 - 2' tall within 10 - 12 weeks and then begin to flower. That is when potatoes begin to form.
- Begin reducing the frequency of watering to about 1x/week; the leaves will begin to yellow and the top will start to look as though it's dying.
- You can start poking around for potatoes any time, but they'll get bigger and more abundant as the plant dies down.
- Stop watering entirely when the top is more than half-dead.

They store just fine in the soil. If you lift them, keep them out of direct light. The green parts of potato tubers, which form in response to light, contain solanine which makes them bitter and toxic.

You can replant from your initial planting for another crop a few months later, but it isn't advisable to use your own starts more than once. Buy new, certified disease-free 'seed' potatoes each season, and don't plant them in the same spot year after year. If your heritage is Irish or Swedish, you already know the primary reason for this advice. But in addition to Potato blight, there are viruses which will spread from one crop to the next.

**Red Norland** Early maturing. Very productive, a great all-purpose potato. Firm, creamy texture, more moist than other potatoes; the potato salad type.

**California White** Long white potatoe are most commonly grown in California round white potatoes back east. Very productive, thin-skinned, with firm creamy texture.

**Yukon Gold** Gourmet variety with mil flavor, mealier texture than Yellow Finn. Moderately productive.

