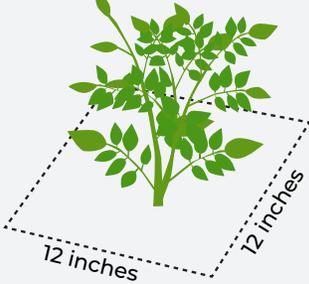


PLANTING WINDOW			LIGHT/SOIL NEEDS		SPACING
JAN	FEB	MAR	  Full Sun Light, well drained soil		
APR	MAY	JUN			
JUL	AUG	SEP			
OCT	NOV	DEC			

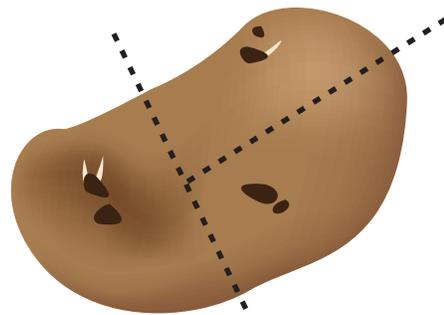
PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

Potatoes are best planted from April to June (wait until the planting bed is dry enough, to avoid rot due to cold, wet soil). Plants will produce the most tubers in full sun and in temperatures between 55 and 70° F. Potatoes for winter harvest should be planted later than those for summer use. Choose a sunny location with a light, sandy, well-draining soil. Potatoes like deep, light and loose soil for best tuber development. Mix in well aged compost and some bone meal.

A seed potato has been grown to be relatively disease free and to give better yields. They are sold as mini tubers or full sized potatoes. Using mini tuber seed potatoes reduces the risk of losing newly-planted stock to rot or fungus attacking cut surfaces. You can “chit” potato tubers (pre-sprout for faster growth) by placing them eye end up in trays or egg boxes in a light, cool, frost-free area to start sprouting before you plant.

Commercial potatoes from the grocery store are not recommended for planting because they are usually treated to prevent sprouting. Organic grocery store potatoes may be used, however they are often lower-yielding. Similarly, saving your own potatoes and replanting can result in diminishing harvests over time, as viruses build up in your stock.

When using larger seed potatoes, prepare the (chitted) tubers for planting by cutting them into small pieces weighing 1 – 2 ounces (about egg-sized) with two or more good “eyes”. Leave these pieces to dry overnight so the raw edge calluses over to prevent disease issues. Plant the seed potatoes 4" deep and 15" apart. Keep the rows 2 ½ feet apart. If planting cut seed potato pieces, place cut side down. Start watering regularly after the plant emerges. Irrigating too soon will cause the seed potato to rot in the ground.



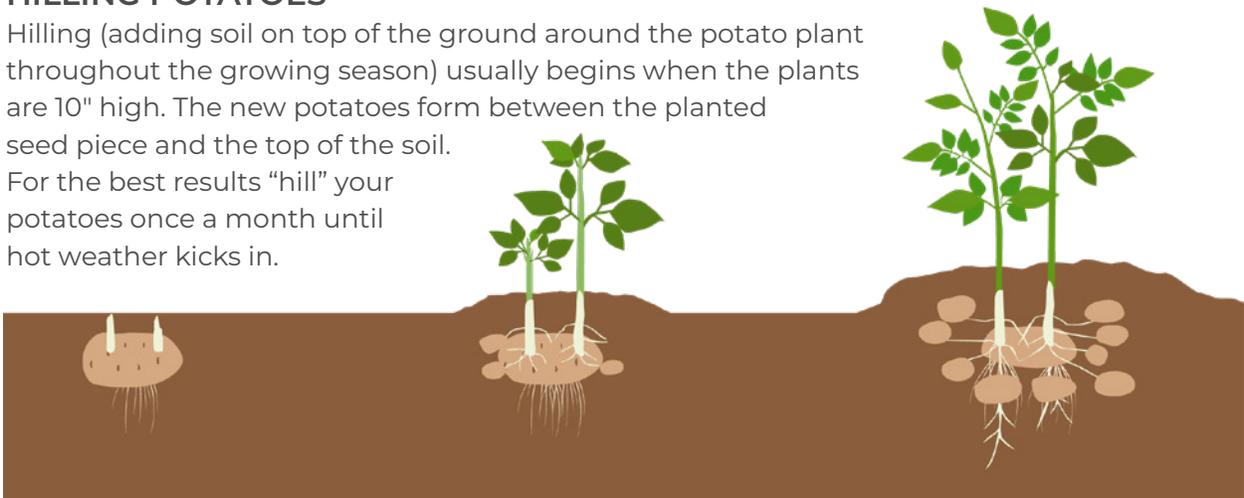
DETERMINATE VS. INDETERMINATE POTATOES

As with tomatoes, “determinate” potato varieties tend to be more compact in habit and more limited in their harvest window than “indeterminate” ones. Most modern and commercial varieties are determinate, giving a more uniform harvest. The tubers grow in just one layer and mature all at once. With indeterminate varieties, both vines and roots continue to grow. Under ideal conditions, including proper hilling (see below), indeterminate potato plants will produce multiple layers of tuber-producing stolons, and therefore ultimately a larger (but usually later) harvest. Potatoes usually grow best in the ground. If you are growing potatoes in containers, small containers require determinate varieties, while very large containers are good for indeterminate varieties.

HILLING POTATOES

Hilling (adding soil on top of the ground around the potato plant throughout the growing season) usually begins when the plants are 10" high. The new potatoes form between the planted seed piece and the top of the soil.

For the best results “hill” your potatoes once a month until hot weather kicks in.



For determinate potatoes, hilling will not increase the potato yield; rather hilling protects the developing tubers from sunlight. With indeterminate varieties, hilling both protects the developing tubers and increases the ultimate yield by providing more space for new potatoes to grow. You can continue to hill indeterminate potatoes a few inches of soil at a time, leaving the top sets of leaves above soil level.

HARVESTING INSTRUCTIONS

Tubers can be harvested for immediate use as soon as they are large enough. Immature potatoes are great eating, but do not store well.

Late season varieties are ready for harvest 1 to 2 weeks after the tops die back. Dig carefully to avoid piercing. Do not wash. Remove cut, bruised or damaged potatoes and eat these first. Store the remainder in a dark, cool location that stays between 38 and 40° F. Storage potatoes need to breath so keep them in paper bags, burlap or cardboard boxes. Prolonged exposure to light will cause greening and a buildup of inedible toxins.