

Potato Onion Planting & Growing Guide

Questions? Contact us at (888) 784-1722 or helpdesk@groworganic.com



Potato Onions, (*Allium cepa* var. *aggregatum*) also called Hill Onion, Mother Onion, or Pregnant Onions, are a long-term storage multiplier onion that can be grown in the fall or spring (depending on where you live). Potato onions produces clusters of onions similar to shallots with some important differences. They are typically larger than shallots with a stronger flavor and store much longer, up to 12 months if conditions are right. Potato onions are long day, so not appropriate for southern Texas or Florida.

GROWING BASICS

Soil: Will grow in a wide range of soils but prefers mildly acidic to neutral soils that is well drained and rich in organic matter.

Spacing: Rows 12–18" apart, sow 4–6" for small bulbs and 8" apart for larger bulbs

Companion planting:

Incompatibility – Beans and peas.

Companions – Cabbage, carrots, leeks, lettuce, marjoram, parsley, parsnip, roses, tomatoes.

Water requirements: Keep well watered, if soil dries out then growth will stop. Best to use drip irrigation rather than overhead watering.

Fertilization: After planting, feed with a fertilizer that is higher in phosphorus, a 5-10-5 mix is a good choice.

Weeding: keep well weeded, does not compete well with weeds.

Plant in full sun. Very small bulbs may not multiply the first year, but will the second season.

PLANTING & GROWING

Potato onions can be planted in the spring or fall depending on where you live and how harsh the winters are. Fall planting can give bigger yields but if the winter is very harsh, some bulbs may be lost.

Spring Planting: if your winters are very harsh, plant in the spring when ground is workable. Plant bulb deep enough to leave about ½–1" of soil covering bulb, colder winter areas plant a little deeper, about 2–5" of soil covering bulb. Mulch heavily (4–8") making sure to remove most of the mulch in the spring.

Organic Gardening Resource Center

Check Out Our How-to Videos & Articles

Videos

Growing Onions and Shallots

Articles

Shallots and Leeks: The Lesser Known Onion Cousins for the Garden and Kitchen

200+ HOW-TO VIDEOS • 300+ ARTICLES • PLANTING CALCULATOR
TIP OF THE WEEK • GROWING GUIDES • RECIPES & MORE!

groworganic.com/pages/resource-center

Fall Planting: if winters are mild to moderate you can plant in the fall from October to December. Plant bulb deep enough to leave about ½–1" of soil covering bulb.

HARVESTING

As the potato onions are getting close to harvest the tops will fall over. When you see the tops start to fall over, cut off the water and make sure all of the mulch is removed (about 2 weeks before lifting). Once about half of the tops have fallen over, the potato onions are ready to lift. You can harvest the whole cluster or take only a few for immediate use. Make sure to harvest on a dry day.

To cure, bring the bulbs into a shaded, dry warm area with good air circulation. Spread them out in a single layer and let them cure for about 1–2 months. During the curing period make sure to monitor for any spoiled bulbs and remove them. After curing, cut the tops off about 1" above the bulb and separate the onion clusters.

STORAGE

After curing store between 35–40°F or 50–70°F with about 60–70% humidity. Onions may sprout if stored between 40–50°F, so do not put them in the refrigerator. Best to store in a mesh bag or on a shelf (in a single layer) with good air circulation and placed in a root cellar, cool room or garage. Will keep for up to 12 months if conditions are right.

COMMON PESTS & DISEASES

Onion Fly: usually a problem during very wet growing seasons. Control with a product labeled for onion flies (or maggots).

Onion Thrips: Can control with insecticidal soap.

Flea Beetle: chews leaves and head. Control with sticky traps, barriers such as Agribon rowcover, or organic insecticides labeled for flea beetles.

Slugs: Control by either hand picking or use a product labeled to control slugs.

PEST CONTROL - IPM

Important to practice good cultural controls for pest management of potato onions. Cultural controls such as removing plants after harvest (to avoid leaving food for insects to continue to multiply on), use healthy bulbs to plant, practice crop rotation (e.g. do not plant onions in same area for 3-5 years).

DEFINITIONS

Heirloom: Heirloom seeds come from open-pollinated plants that pass on similar characteristics and traits from the parent plant to the next generation plant. Heirloom vegetables are old-time varieties generally which have been in production since before WWII, and have been saved and handed down through multiple generations.

Hybrid: a cross between two or more unrelated plant varieties. The two different varieties are cross bred, resulting in a seed that carries one or more favorable traits (increased yield, uniformity, color, disease resistance.) Hybrid seeds are not GMO, as they are manually cross-bred, not genetically modified in a lab. Hybrid seed is often sterile or does not reproduce true to the parent plant. Therefore, never save the seed from hybrids.

Open Pollinated: generally refers to seeds that will "breed true". When the plants of an open-pollinated variety self-pollinate, or are pollinated by another representative of the same variety, the resulting seeds will produce plants roughly identical to their parents. Genetic traits may differ only slightly due to variations created by local conditions.

GMO: Genetically Modified Organisms were genetically modified in a laboratory where DNA genes are extracted and mixed with other unrelated plants to improve characteristics. Saved seed will not always be viable and may be trademarked to prevent unauthorized use.

Return Policy

Perishable Items (3-Day Return Policy)

We guarantee the perishable items we sell to be in good, viable condition when we sell them. Perishable items include, but are not limited to, garlic bulbs, flower bulbs, seed potatoes, onion sets & transplants, bare-root trees, vegetable crowns... etc. If your perishable item arrives in substandard condition, please contact us within 3 days of the purchase date (or delivery date) and we will provide you with a refund of the purchase price (including shipping costs), or a replacement. Accordingly, we urge you to open any boxes marked as "Perishable" immediately upon receiving them. Because some perishable items can deteriorate very quickly, we cannot accept any claims beyond the 3-day time frame as it becomes too difficult to determine if these items were delivered in substandard condition, or if they turned into such substandard condition because of having been improperly cared for or stored once delivered.

Limited Product Guarantee

Limitation of Remedy

We warrant to the extent of the purchase price only that the seeds or plants sold hereunder are as described on the label within recognized tolerances. No other warranty is given, expressed or implied, of (1) the merchantability or fitness of the seeds or plants for any particular purpose, or (2) against loss due to any cause. We cannot accept any responsibility for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions (soil preparation, fertilization, weed and pest control, temperature control, irrigation...etc.) that must be met to insure the success of your crop(s) or plants.



Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply

P.O. Box 2209 • 125 Clydesdale Ct. • Grass Valley, CA 95945
(888) 784-1722 • Fax (530) 272-4794
www.growOrganic.com

Follow Us on Social Media!

