

Potato Growing Guide



What to Plant

How to Plant

How to Grow

When to Harvest

How to Store

Growing Potatoes



Potatoes are tubers that love cool weather. They can survive a light frost.

Originating in the Andes, there are more than 4000 potato varieties!

Growing potatoes at home lets you grow unique delicious varieties.

This guide covers everything you need to know to grow potatoes: how to pre-sprout them, how deep to plant them, when to hill them, and when/how to harvest & store them.

In a Nutshell

To grow potatoes you don't plant seeds.
You actually plant another potato.

Outdoors: mid- May to late June

depending on region, variety,
or pest pressure.

Rows: 30 - 60" apart

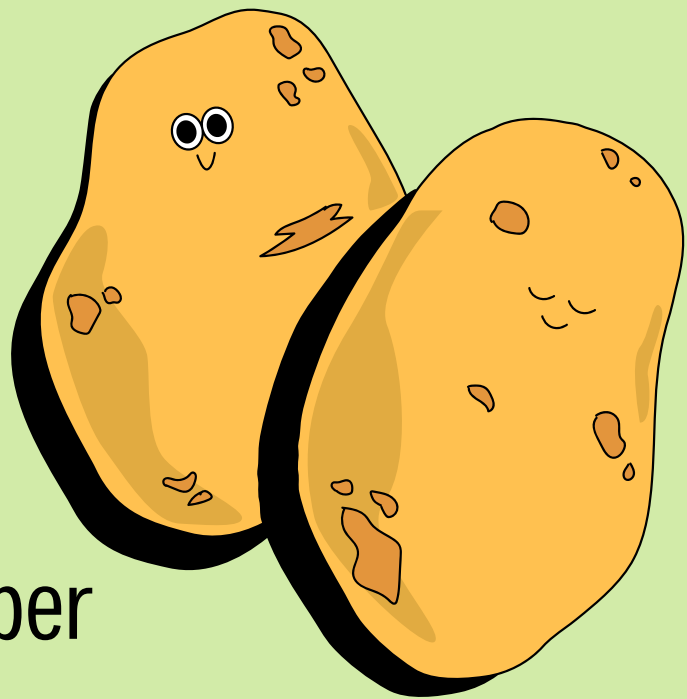
Spacing: 8 - 12" in row

Harvest: August - September

Days to maturity:

New Potatoes: 40 - 60 days

Storage Potatoes: 80 - 130 days



What is a Seed Potato?

Where you get your seed potatoes is important!

It's not a great idea to buy potatoes from the grocery store to plant at home. Treated with chemicals to prevent them from sprouting, they haven't been tested for common seed potato diseases.

That's why it's best to buy certified seed potatoes. These potatoes are certified disease free and have not been treated in any way.

Some gardeners like to save seed potatoes from year to year.



Seed potatoes can sometimes carry diseases and, without being able to test your seed potatoes as seed companies do, may offer some risk.

At the same time, we take a lot of risks as gardeners and it can be a wonderful adventure to save your own seed.

How to Sprout & Cut your Seed Potato

Planting sprouted seed potatoes gives them more chances of survival.

Sprout your potatoes 3 - 4 weeks before you'll plant in the ground

All you need is a bright window or a fluorescent lamp. A recycled egg carton or two make a great base for sitting your seed potatoes in to keep them stable.

Warmth starts the tubers sprouting. Light keeps the sprouts from getting too long. Short, strong sprouts are best for handling & planting.



The ideal seed potato is a whole small potato with several 'eyes'. But if you have larger potatoes, you can cut them into largish pieces ensuring each piece has 1 - 3 eyes.

If you cut tubers, let them dry overnight before planting to avoid rot.

How to Plant a Seed Potato

Dig a hole
or a trench
about
6 - 8 inches deep

Add compost from the year
before.

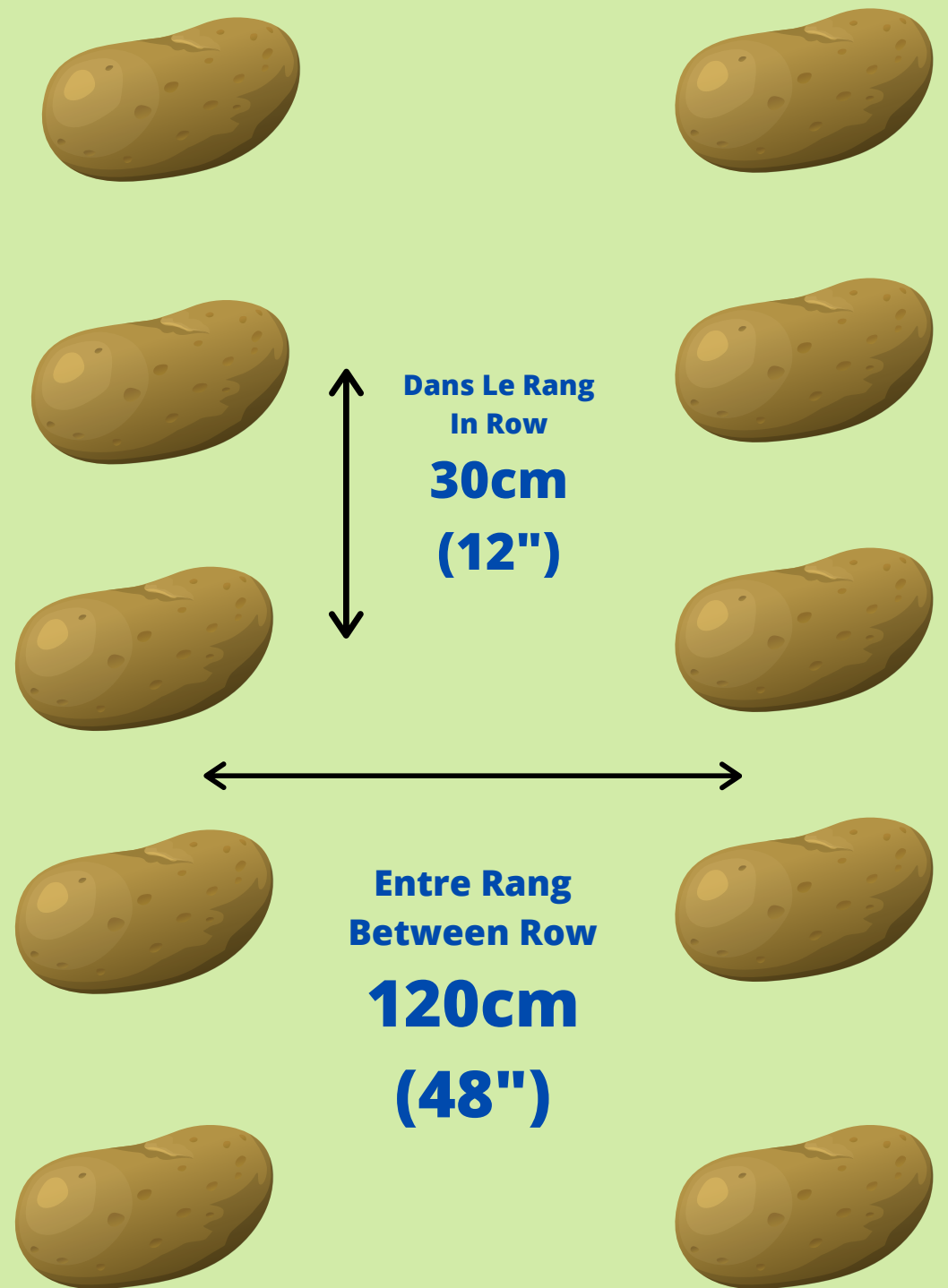
Seed Potatoes don't like
fresh compost. Fresh
organic matter can cause
galls on their skins.



How to Plant a Seed Potato

Plant the seed potatoes in the bottom of the trench about 12 inches apart and cover with soil. Ensure the eyelets are pointing upwards.

Light frost may kill any new growth above the soil line once they sprout, but don't panic. This will not kill the potato plant and the potatoes will regrow their foliage quickly.



How to Grow your seed potatoes into lots of spuds

Hilling the soil above the new green growth will increase the length of underground stems that will bear potatoes. It forms new clusters of potatoes as it grows.



Hilling can be repeated every 2 to 3 weeks, whenever leaves poke out of the top of the mound. This prevents tubers from greening and promotes larger growth. It also smothers any competing weeds.

Water daily. Once the foliage begins to yellow, stop watering to prevent rot.

When to Harvest

Days to maturity:

New Potatoes: 40 - 60 days

Storage Potatoes:

80 - 130 days

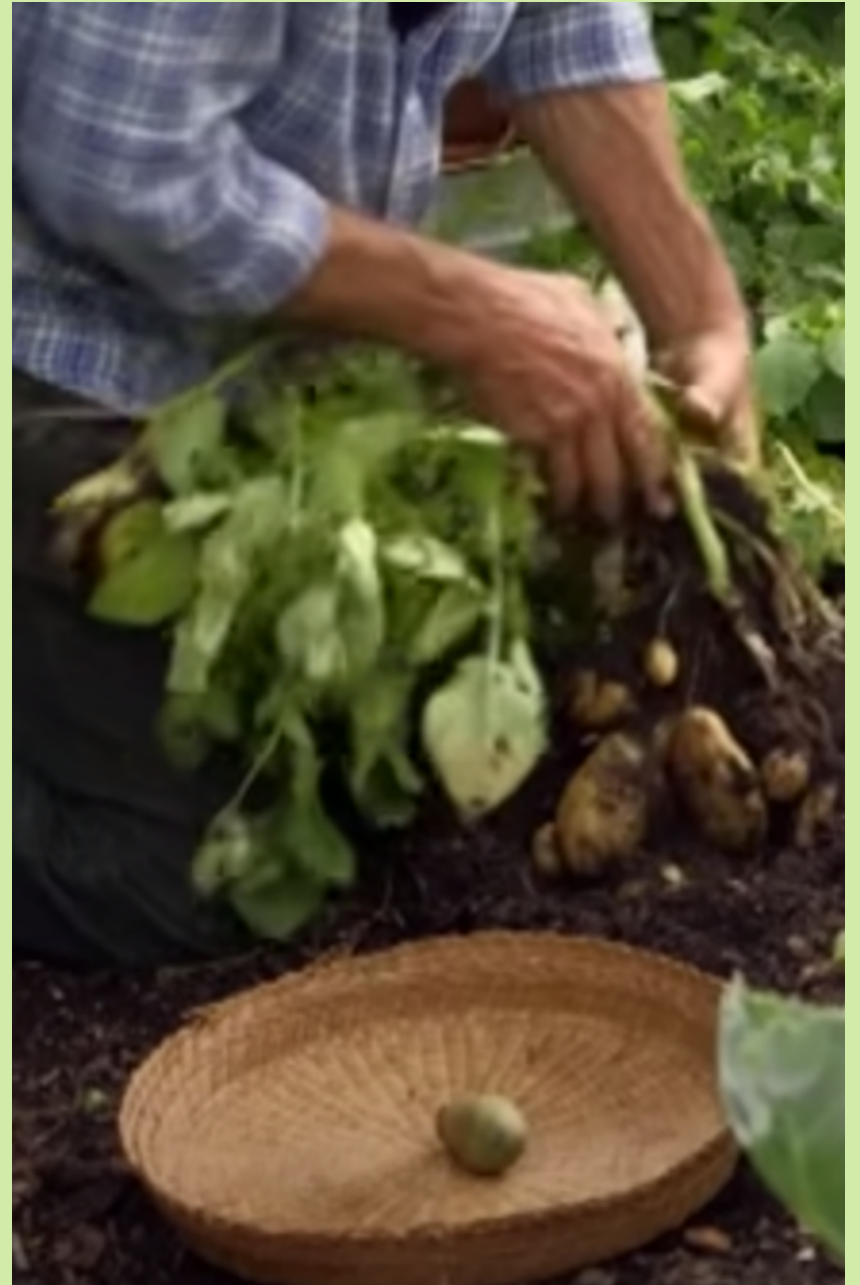
New Potatoes:

Harvest 7-8 weeks after planting; when plants begin to flower. Just use your hands to pull up a few tubers from that top row of spuds without disturbing the rest.

Storage Potatoes:

Wait 2 weeks after foliage has died back. Harvest when soil is **dry**. Dig up potatoes and brush off soil before storage. Each potato plant should produce 1-3 lbs of tubers.

NOTE: Should you have a potato blight, and lose your greenery, don't dismay as the potatoes below ground should still be fine.



Pests & Disease

Colorado Potato Beetles:

Females lay clusters of bright yellowish-orange oval eggs on the underside of leaves. Check underside of leaves for these orange eggs, and **squish to remove.**



Photo Credit: University of Minnesota Extension

Terracotta coloured larvae emerge from any egg clusters you didn't manage to squish. They will feed on your potatoes leaves.

When young larvae first hatch, they are brick red with black heads. Older larvae are pink to salmon colored with black heads. All larvae have two rows of dark spots on each side.

Squish the larvae to keep them from devouring your plants.

How to Store Potatoes

The ideal temperature to store potatoes is 0°C - 4°C.

For most gardeners without a root cellar or cold storage a “cool dry cupboard, garage or basement without big temperature variations” is the best advice.



We love potatoes as they are clearly a staple and so versatile. From summer potato salads to winter chowders and roasted, mashed, baked or fried ! An essential, they are especially delicious grown in your home garden!

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