

How to... Plant Seed Potatoes

Part of the Pacific Nurseries
'How to...' series

Growing Instructions

Before planting, seed potatoes need to be 'chitted' or 'sprouted' for about five weeks. This means leaving them in a light, cool, frost free place to develop short, stocky shoots, from which the plant grows. If space is limited, choose the early varieties, as they take up less room.

Growing in the Ground

Planting can take place as soon as the risk of hard frost has passed. Plant the potatoes in trenches 10-15cm (4"-6") deep, with at least 40cm (16") between trenches. Space each one about 30cm (1 ft) apart, with most of the shoots pointing upwards, and cover with soil.

When the plants reach about 23cm (9") tall, draw the soil from between the rows up around the plants. This is called 'earthing up'. Leave 13cm (5") of top growth exposed. Try to repeat this process at least twice during the growing season.

It is important to keep your plants well watered, particularly when in flower, as this will improve the crop yield.

Growing in Containers

Seed potatoes can be grown in large containers. Use a rich compost and add in some manure or fertiliser.

Once the potatoes are 'chitted' (see above), place a 10cm (4") layer of compost in the bottom of the container. Stand the potatoes on top and cover them with a 3" layer of compost. When the plants reach about 15cm (6") tall, cover with more compost until only the tips are showing. Repeat this process until the top of the container is reached.

The best variety to grow in containers is a first early and plant in either late March for a July crop or in July for a Christmas crop.

Harvesting

First Earlies should be harvested from June to July, Second Earlies should be harvested from July to September and Main Crops should be harvested from September to October.



Top Tip:
Potatoes are hungry feeders, so prepare the soil by working in Westland Farmyard Manure

The team at Pacific Nurseries are highly experienced. As plant growers and the supplier of thousands of plants to over 100 garden centres in the region, we are well placed to advise you on any of your gardening questions. Please ask us for any help you need.

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