

Project List: Potato Planting

1. Bulk or packaged seed potatoes:

Seed potatoes should have some eyes already sprouting on them. If they don't, set in a warm place in your home for a few days until sprouts start to grow. Large seed potatoes may be cut into several golf-ball sized pieces, as long as each piece has two or three eyes. If seed potatoes are cut, let them cure (dry) for about 3-4 days and dust with sulfur before planting. This will help avoid rot.

2. Dusting Sulfur

Helps protect seed potatoes from fungal growth, ensuring they get a strong start.

3. Compost

Potatoes do best in rich, well-drained soil with lots of organic matter. Adding organic compost such as Vital Earth Organic Compost will ensure that garden soil is nutrient-rich and aerated.

4. NHG Organic Herb and Veggie Food

An excellent all-around organic fertilizer for your edibles; work this in according to package directions before planting your seed potatoes.

5. Pine Straw

Backfill the holes with 6" of pine straw creating a mound over the trough. As leaves grow and emerge through the pine straw, begin to mound reserved soil on top of the leaves and pine straw. Continue this process as leaves grow until all soil is used. This creates a layer within which the potatoes develop. During the growing season, side dress with organic fertilizer to maximize yield.

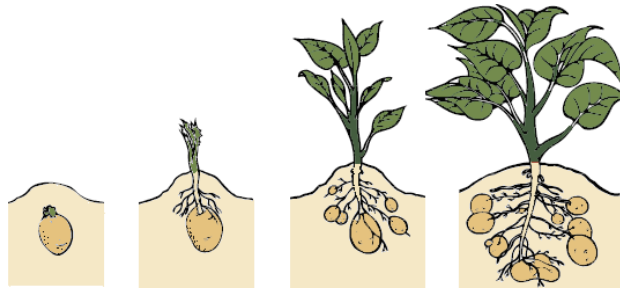
6. Short on space? Plant potatoes in a portable fabric planting pot!

Allow 12" all around for each seed potato. Plant in potting soil and add NHG Organic Herb and Veggie Food. When planted in containers, you only need to back fill with soil/pine straw mix, then mulch with pine straw or hardwood mulch.



Potato Planting: How To

1. Begin by cutting up larger seed potatoes into 2 or 3 sections, large enough so that each has 2 or 3 "eyes" (sprouts) per section. 'Golf ball size' is the rule of thumb. Lay out on paper to dry for 3 or 4 days.
2. Next, dust with dusting sulfur and plant. You can plant small varieties whole, unless you just want more. You'll **still want to dust whole seed potatoes with sulfur** before you plant them.
3. **In the garden, dig a trough in well-amended soil about 6-8" deep, and about 4" wide.** If you're planting in a container, only fill the container 1/3 full with your soil mix.
4. **Plant the seed potatoes about 12" apart.**
5. In the trough, **cover the seed potatoes with about 3" - 4"** of your existing **soil mix**, mixed with some **pine straw**, so that it's loose and aerated around the seed potatoes.



6. **Sprouts will usually start to emerge in a couple of weeks.**
7. Let the stems get about **8" tall**, then **back fill around them with another 3-4" inches of soil/pine straw mix.** You'll probably need to do this "hilling" one more time 2 or 3 weeks later, then thereafter, only add about an inch or two around the stems each week as they continue to grow.
8. **Your potatoes will form in the space between the seed potato and the surface of the soil**, so you need enough room for them to form and a light enough mixture so it's not too heavily compacted.
9. **If you're using a container**, follow the same procedure, filling up the container as the stems grow.
10. **Moisture management is key to potato success in our area.** Water them early in the day so moisture does not sit on the foliage over night. If you see spots on the leaves forming, treat with an organic fungicide immediately and follow up several times at 7-10 day intervals.
11. **When the plants are flowering, that is when they are forming potatoes.**
12. If you want to **harvest baby potatoes** from just underneath the soil, you can start harvesting about **2-3 weeks after flowering begins.** If you want **larger potatoes** in the fall, harvest about **2-3 weeks after the foliage has died down in late fall.**

Don't forget to plant rosemary, thyme and sage to roast or mash with your potatoes!