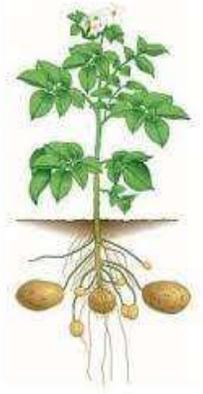




# GROWING POTATOES

## By Eagle Creek Farm



- **Step #1 Open Bag**

- Remove your Potatoes from the bag
- If you leave your potatoes in the bag too long your potatoes may produce long white fragile sprouts

- **Step #2 Green Sprouting**

- Skip this step if your garden is ready for planting
- Place your potatoes in a well lit area, full sun is not recommended
- Instead of growing long white sprouts (as often happens in your pantry) the potatoes will grow a small rosette of leaves not much bigger than a quarter
- When your soil warms up plant the potatoes as you normally would
- Green Sprouted potatoes can sometimes be ready for harvest up to 10 days earlier than non sprouted potatoes

21 days of green sprouting is the recommended time. We have however, sprouted potatoes for nearly 6 weeks before planting with no negative effects on the tubers.

- **Step #3 Fertilize**

- Nutrition is key to a healthy potato plant and a fantastic harvest of potatoes
- Nutrition can be applied in spring, fall & through the growing season and can come from incorporating a cover crop grown the previous year, adding compost or through organic or non organic fertilizers
- Adding too much compost can cause your potatoes to become scabby and too much readily available nitrogen can result in potato plants that are all leaves and no potatoes
- We have had lots of success with incorporating cover crops combined with organic fertilizers that are applied at the time of planting

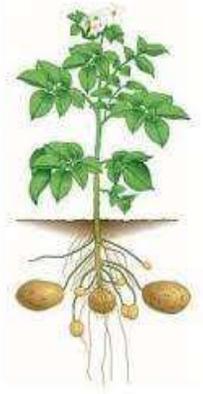
- **Step #4 Planting**

- When growing in a garden we recommend allowing for 2-3 feet square per plant
- Dig a hole only 3 inches deep, place the potato in the hole and cover with only 1 inch of soil, you want the potatoes leaves to reach the surface as soon as possible
- Once the leaves are 3-5 inches out of the ground you can start to hill up dirt around the stem, it is ok to cover the leaves in dirt, they will push through the soil again. Continue to mound the dirt up as the potatoes grow until your mound is 6-10 inches tall and 12-18 inches wide



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- This mound of dirt will be where your potatoes will form
  
- **Step #5 Water and Monitor**
  - Potatoes produce lots of leaves and require lots of water
  - You don't want soggy wet soil, however if you let the ground dry out completely your harvest may be less than expected
  - Dry soil may also stress your potato plants causing their natural defenses to weaken allowing bacteria such as scab or rhizoctonia to latch onto the skins
  - A healthy potato plant can fight off most insect and diseases that can cause harm to your crop
  
- **Step #6 Harvest**
  - There are many rules of thumb which may or may not work, such as "wait until the potato has flowered before harvesting" Unfortunately not all potato varieties will flower
  - We recommend digging in the side of your potato hill with your hand periodically to see how large the potatoes are getting. If you like big potatoes, leave them until the first frost
  - If you like small potatoes keep a close eye on them as potatoes can double in size each week

### **Maturity**

- What varieties will grow in your garden? Most likely all that we offer. We grow all the varieties in our 90 day frost free growing season.
- Maturity of a variety is often described as early, mid-season and late. Differences will occur between regions but the general rule of thumb that I follow is early – 60 days, mid season – 90 days, and late – 120 days measured from the time of planting until harvest. Potatoes will emerge anywhere from 3-5 weeks after planting. Green Sprouting is a good technique for maturing potatoes earlier and for maturing later season varieties in short season regions.

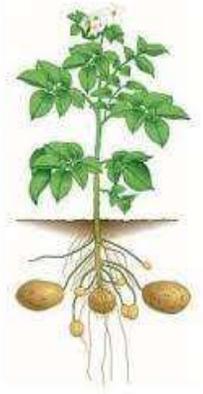
### **When to Plant?**

- How warm should the soil at planting time be?
- The soil temperature should be at least 5°C. Ideally the soil temp at the depth that the seed piece will be placed should be 10°C. It is also very important that the temperature of the seed piece is close to being the same as the temperature of the soil at planting time.



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### How Many Potatoes will you receive?

- Typically for early season varieties you will receive 6-10 potatoes per kg. you can cut these and get 14-16 individual hills per kg. Mid and late season will average between 7-14 potatoes per kg and we would only recommend cutting the larger seeds. anything smaller than a golf ball is typically not cut.
- Fingerling varieties can be as high as 16-18 potatoes per kg, yet usually range around 12-16 per kg.
- **Scab**
- Probably the #1 question we receive each year. There are a few varieties that are more susceptible to scab, Banana, Russian Blue, Agria and some that are relatively resistant, Kennebec, Norland, Russet Burbank, Pacific Russet, Purple Viking, Pink Fir Apple
- Bacteria that are present in most soils cause scab. The incidence of scab is dependent on the following factors: variety, soil, pH, and moisture.
- Soil:
  - High levels of organic matter increase the risk of scab, regardless of variety. If you have added large quantities of straw or manure to your garden site you have raised the percentage of organic matter and raised the risk of scab. Recently tilled pastures usually have higher levels of organic matter.
  - Sandy soil, which is low in organic matter, has a low risk of scab.
  - Dry years tend to be worse than wet years for scab. Scab only affects the appearance of the potato and does not affect the eating quality of the flesh of the tuber.
  - In a dry year keeping the soil moist with watering is an excellent tool to reduce scab.
- **pH :**
- It is possible to amend the pH of your soil using both organic and no-organic methods. The ideal pH for potatoes is between 4.8 – 5.5, which is slightly more acidic than most vegetables prefer. In less Acidic soils, potatoes are more prone to scab.

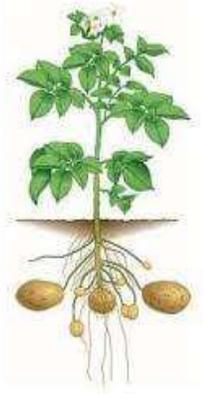
### Green Sprouting

- Pre-sprouting your potatoes can advance your first harvest by up to 2 weeks!



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- Whole seed can be Green Sprouted (Chitted) prior to planting, this will ensure earlier emergence. 2-3 weeks prior to your desired planting date place your potatoes in a well lit area of the house, but not in direct sunlight. 16 Degrees Celsius is ideal.

Instead of producing long sprouts like those you will find during the spring in your cellar, the potatoes will produce strong short green sprouts which will be ready to grow into plants as soon as you get them in warm soil.

### Seed Spacing

- Early varieties can be planted close together (6"-10"), as they tend to have a low number of tubers per hill. Planting them close restricts the nutrition and light each plant can access, which helps to keep the size of those nice new potatoes to a minimum. Or if you want the earliest potatoes at the market, plant early season potatoes 12" apart, green sprout before planting and use a floating rowcover.
- Mid season varieties are generally planted 8" to 12" apart. Late Season Varieties & Fingerling Varieties should be planted 12" or more.

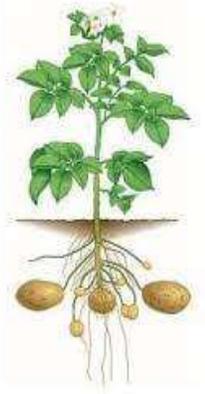
### Nutrition

- Potatoes are heavy feeders, however this doesn't mean you need to use loads of synthetic fertilizers to grow a good crop. We no longer use synthetic fertilizers in our Seed Potato Fields yet still are getting fantastic yields. With that said in our personal garden we rarely use anything other than compost.
- For those looking for a good synthetic blend, this is what we were selling prior to our organic transition. 21-22-6-5. Important Micro Nutrients are .5% Boron and 1% Magnesium. It may be hard to find a fertilizer that contains this exact mix, do not worry. This formulation is only a base line that commercial potato growers use to maximize production. An important component to a good synthetic fertilizer mix is a combination of both readily available and slow release nitrogen. Too much nitrogen early on in the growth will result in an excess of leaves and plants lacking in tuber growth. It is also essential to test your soil and get a professional opinion on nutrient requirements. All soils are different and have varying requirements.



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- ***Mix in your nutrition.*** It doesn't matter if it is compost or synthetic fertilizers, it is very important to add your source of nutrition then stir up the soil where you will plant your potatoes. It is not healthy for the plants to be in close contact with excess amounts of concentrated minerals