

Watering your Potato

Potatoes require a damp but well drained soil. Because much of Florida soil is sand the addition of organic material will reduce the number of time you need to water. Both in-ground and potted potato plants need to be kept moist but not overly wet. Keeping the soil too wet will cause rot and too dry will cause tough potatoes.

Fertilizing

Potatoes are heavy feeders and require regular fertilizing. For inground plantings find a fertilizer that has the middle number close to 0 such as a 10-2-8. For potted plants a balanced 10-10-10 fertilizer is recommended. Slow release is preferable to water soluble especially for inground growing.

Harvesting

Harvesting is cultivar dependent usually happening 90-120 days after planting. See chart on back of brochure for typical harvesting times. If the plant has not died by the harvest date cut the stem and allow the potatoes to cure in ground for 1 week. This will extend the shelf life of the potatoes.

Discard any Green potatoes as they are poisonous.

Common Varieties for Florida

White Skinned

	Common Use	Average Days to Harvest
'LaChipper'	C	95
'Sebago'	M, F, B, R	60-90
'Yukon gold'	M, F, B, R	92

Red Skin

'Red LaSoda'	F, B, R	86- 100
'LaRouge'	F, B, R	86- 100

Purple Skin

'Peter Wilcox'	C, F, B, R	91
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Blue Skin and Flesh

'Adirondack'	M, F, B, R	88
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Use key: C-chipped, M-mashed, F-fried, B-boiled, R-roasted

Information Adapted from "Growing Potatoes in the Florida Home Garden" by Christian Christensen et. al
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**Come and Grow:
Potatoes**
Tips and instructions on planting
potatoes in a home garden

Prep-Work

Seed Potatoes

"Seed" potatoes are actually potatoes grown specifically for the purpose of planting for a potato crop. Purchasing "certified" seed potatoes from a reputable source ensures your plants start as healthy as possible.

Selecting a Site

An ideal site will have:

1. **A minimum of 8 hours of sunlight**
2. **Well drained soil away from areas where water pools**
3. **Slightly acidic soil (pH 5-6)**
4. **Easy access to a close water source**
5. **High organic matter.**

Many sites in Florida meet these conditions and may just need a little amending with organic matter.



Preparing the Seed Potato

Seed potatoes can be planted whole or cut into pieces. Pieces should be about the size of an egg. Make sure you sterilize your cutting tool between each tuber and make as few cuts as possible. Let any cut pieces cure in a well ventilated area for 2 days prior to planting.

Planting

In Florida, potatoes are normally planted in the beginning of the year to around Feb 14th. Plant seed potatoes 4-6 inches deep and make sure they are 6-8 inches apart. If you cut the tubers make sure the cut side is down. As your potato grows you may need to hill them. This means adding soil if any tubers are showing. Do not allow any tubers to be exposed to light for long periods of time.

Growing Potatoes in Pots

Choose Your Container

Containers should be deep and wide. The Rule of thumb is 5 gallons of soil to each potato plant. There are many different types of containers you can use to grow potatoes. Grow bags and clay pots allow the soil to dry quicker and are good choices for people who tend to over water. Plastic containers hold in more moisture and more drainage holes may be needed.

Potting Soil

Planting containers should always be filled with potting soil. Top soil or garden soil will compress in a container and will yield fewer potatoes. Purchase or make your own with a mixture of Coco coir, pine bark fines, and perlite.

