

How to grow potatoes



Potatoes like sunny sites and deep, well-drained soil.

You can start your seed potatoes off by ‘chitting’ them before planting. Stand them up in an egg box with the flatter end up, in a cool, light room, until the little eyes start to grow shoots.

Plant your potatoes in the spring, when the soil has warmed up. Either dig a small hole for each potato, or dig a trench. Plant them about 15cm (6ins) deep, and 30cm (12ins) apart. If you have more than one row, allow 60cm (24ins) between rows.

If you’re short of space, you can grow potatoes in containers at least 30cm (12ins) deep. Plant one seed potato per bucket, or three in a larger container. You can also buy tough fabric containers that can be packed away after use.

When the first shoots start to appear, add more soil over the top of them to make a rounded ridge (this is called ‘earthing up’). Continue doing this until you have a ridge of soil about 30cm (12ins) high, or until your container is full.

Water young plants well, and water during dry spells. Your potatoes are ready when the flowers open or the buds drop. Lift them carefully with a garden fork.