

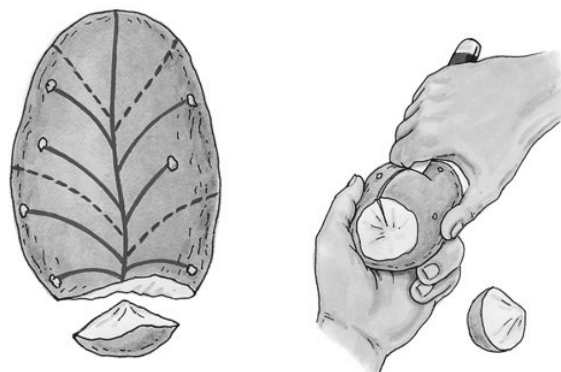
Seed Potatoes

Plant anytime between early April and June 1 with harvest 2-4 months later. Cut seed potatoes and allow 2 to 3 eyes on a piece of a tuber (see illustration at right). Allow the cut surface to dry for at least 2-3 hours or overnight.

Plant potatoes in well-drained soil amended with organic matter like compost or composted manure. Plant the pieces in a trench dug 4" deep, spacing the pieces and 12-18" apart. Space rows 24-30" apart. Fertilize with 10-10-10 or Espoma Garden Tone according to the package directions. Water-in well. Side-dress with fertilizer once or twice after tubers begin forming. Proper watering will enhance good production. Soak the soil thoroughly when watering, to a depth of at least one inch each week during the growing season.

Potatoes tend to set tubers near the surface of the soil so hill soil around the plants or add 3-4" of straw or other mulch under and around the vines as they grow to avoid sun-greening. Mulch will also reduce the need to weed and retain water. You can also carefully harvest these potatoes without damaging the entire plant at about 7-8 weeks after planting.

Harvest any time after the plant has died down. Use a spading fork and starting 2-feet from the center of the plant, carefully pry up the soil. Work your way in, sliding the tines under the tubers so they can be lifted without puncturing. Don't wash the tubers for storage and keep in a dark cool place at 40-50 degrees. If the soil is dry



A potato tuber is a much enlarged and modified stem. In the illustration above, the stem end is at the bottom. The eyes are really buds, each fed by a vein or feeder fiber that runs to the stem end of the tuber, indicated by the solid lines in the illustration at left. That is the way the tuber develops as it grows. If this feeder fiber is undisturbed in cutting, the new plant that develops from the sprouting eye will develop and feed through the same fiber.

Begin cutting sections (dotted lines at left) by holding the tuber with stem end downward (right). First remove a conical section around the stem end. Then, starting about 1/2 inch above an eye, cut toward the stem end, meeting the stem with the knife in each cut. Leave at least one but ideally 2-3 healthy-looking eyes in each piece.



218 St. Andrews Drive, Mankato (507) 388-4877

www.drummersgardencenter.com

It's best to purchase certified seed potatoes which are untreated and ready to grow. They can be found in numerous varieties.

