



# Potato

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Potatoes are easy to grow and are a staple crop in many countries. With lots of varieties available it's important to know that not all potatoes are the same.

Some are right for mashing while others fabulous for baking, steaming, microwaving and then there are those that make the perfect chip. Here a rundown of the most common varieties of spuds and how to use them.

Variety	Description	Boiling/Salad	Mashing	Baking	Roasting	Chips
Coliban	Round, white skin, white flesh, floury	Average	Good	Excellent	Average	Good
Desiree	Long, red skin, yellow flesh, creamy	Good	Good	Average	Good	Poor
Dutch Cream	Oval, yellow skin, yellow flesh, creamy	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Good
Fir Apple	Long, pale pink skin, cream flesh, waxy	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent
Kennebec	Round, white/thin skin, white flesh, floury	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Excellent
King Edward	Oval, white & pink skin, white flesh, fluffy	Poor	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Average
Kipfler	Long, yellow skin, yellow flesh, waxy	Excellent	Poor	Average	Good	Poor
Nicola	Long/oval, yellow skin, yellow flesh, waxy	Good	Good	Good	Good	Average
Pontiac	Round, red skin, white flesh, creamy	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Poor
Royal Bule	Long/oval, purple skin, yellow flesh, sweet	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Ruby Lou	Oval, pink skin, cream/white flesh, creamy	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Good
Sebago	Oval, cream skin, white flesh, floury	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Poor



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Seed Potatoes are available for purchase from June/July, these are the best way to go as they are guaranteed to be virus free. It's possible to grow potatoes in many months of the year, depending on whether the garden receives frost, as potatoes are frost-tender. Potatoes can be planted in late winter through to early spring, shortly before last frost is expected. Although planting can be continued into summer the risk of pest and disease increases.

Before planting put seed potatoes into a well lit (out of sunlight) spot for a few weeks to shoot. Seed Potatoes can be cut in half or small piece to increase the number of plants. If cutting into smaller pieces, leave plenty of flesh with each eye and allow the cuts to dry for 24 hours before planting, as cutting into small pieces can increase the risk of rot.

Potatoes prefer a sunny position with fertile, well-drained, acidic soil with a pH less than 6. They will not thrive in heavy clay or a lime soil. Prepare the potato bed with some compost and some Dynamic Lifter or Rapid Raiser.

Plant seed potatoes 10 cm deep, space 30 cm apart and then cover with a mulch about 30 cm deep to retain moisture and protect tubers from light. New shoots will appear in 2-3 weeks and require mounding which will encourage formation of new tubers. Straw mulch can be used for mounding. Give the plants another dressing of Blood and Bone, Dynamic Lifter or Rapid Raiser pellets in early summer.

There are many different ways to grow potatoes, traditional hilling, deep mulch, containers, potato bags and a no-dig garden. Choose the method that suits your garden area the best as success can be had no matter which way you go.

Potatoes usually take three to four months to mature, depending on the variety. They are ready for harvesting when the majority of the top have withered. Early potatoes may be dug by hand by carefully digging beneath the plant for table use at any time, but for storage the potatoes should be fully mature. Once dug, dry as quickly, and then store in a cool, dark, dry place. As exposure to light will turn the potatoes green; green potatoes are poisonous and should ever be eaten.