

The Potato Story

Firstly, decide on which potato you are going to grow – there are many different types and they can vary in size, shape, colour, cooking and eating qualities. For example, did you know that waxy potatoes ('earlies' / new potatoes) are best boiled for salads, or hot with mint, whilst floury potatoes (second earlies and maincrop) are excellent for chipping, baking, mashing and roasting?

Potatoes are grouped by their season of harvest ie; earlies, second earlies and maincrop, so the time of year you are growing your potato will help you decide which ones you want to grow.

So, you have decided on which variety of potato you would like to grow and have the seed potatoes. What next?

Step 1: 'Chitting' – this is where you allow the potato sprouts to harden. Put your seed potatoes in an open egg box with the sprouts facing up, then put them on a window sill for about 2 weeks.

Step 2: Prepare the area you will be growing your potatoes in – if you are using a bucket, make a drainage hole in the bottom and add compost. If you are planting into the ground, dig in some compost and clear away any large stones or weeds.

Step 3: Now for the planting! The seed potatoes need to be about 15cm deep, with the sprouts facing up. Cover over with compost.

Step 4: Take care to keep the ground around your potato plant moist, but remember that over watering will kill the plant.

Harvesting

Flowering is usually a good sign that your potato has reached the stage when the tubers can be eaten. Take care when digging the potatoes out of the ground and leave them to dry off before storing them in a cool, dry place.

Well done! You have hopefully grown a wonderful batch of healthy potatoes! Next time, try a different variety and decide which is your favourite!

