

HOW TO GROW POTATOES IN A BAG OR POT

Most allotment produce can also be grown in a back garden, it is just a difference in quantity. Many will grow runner beans, salads and tomatoes in their gardens, but how about potatoes? It is possible and does not take too much space or time. The tastiest are new ones, which are also the most expensive in the shops. So why not give it a go?

You need:

Tubers (potatoes). This method works best for early potatoes such as Charlotte (NB. Look out for trial packs that are now becoming more popular in garden centres).
35cm diameter pot (minimum size). See below for variation with growbag/compost bag.

Multipurpose compost or soil from the garden.

Use 1 tuber for each 35cm pot

Liquid seaweed or tomato feed

How:

The ideal planting time is mid March – early April. Although not essential for this method, “chitting” increases the yield. Chitting is a means whereby the seed is forced into growth. Place the potatoes on an empty seed tray or in egg boxes, rose end uppermost. That’s the end with the most eyes. Place in a shed, garage, under the greenhouse staging or any frost free, light (but not sunny) room. Keep checking, after a few weeks small shoots will appear. If you placed them the wrong way up now is the time to carefully turn them. Do not remove these shoots.

Place the pot in the sun against a fence or wall for protection.

Half fill the pot with soil/compost.

Bury the tuber, shoots upwards, just below the surface

As the shoots grow, earth up by adding more compost to just below the leaves.

Continue to earth up until the top 5cm of the pot to allow for watering.

Water regularly, do not allow the soil to dry out.

After six weeks apply a liquid feed during watering at least twice a week.

The top will continue to grow out of the pot and probably drape over the side. This is why it is best near a fence, because the pot can become top heavy.

Depending on the variety you may get some small flowers just above the leaves.

Occasionally a small green tomato type fruit appears. This is a seed pod poisonous if digested.

Eventually the top will die back and flop. Feel around in the soil to see if you can find any potatoes. (If planted mid March this will probably be about end June/early July).

At this point tip the pot out and enjoy.

Variations:

Use a grow bag on its end instead of a pot. Make drainage holes in the bottom, remove half of the compost and save for earthing up. Or an empty compost bag, turned inside out with the black on the outside. Add drainage holes.

Continue same as above. The bags may topple in wind, so place somewhere protected.

You can use 3 tubers in a bag.

You can save some of your potatoes, repeat the process and sometimes have fresh new potatoes at Christmas. In this instance make sure the pot(s) are in a frost free place, or that you cover the growth with horticultural fleece (or similar) when frosts are forecast.

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