



Gardening Tips: Order Your Seed Potatoes Now!

Kids of all ages (this means adults, too!) love growing potatoes in the garden. It's great fun to dig them up from the soil – like finding buried treasure! With the right conditions, potatoes can be easy to grow; they can be a satisfying, interesting, and productive crop. Since the potato tuber forms underground, this crop grows best in really nice loamy soil. Potatoes also grow well in large containers or raised beds.

Now is the time to order seed potatoes, to make sure that the variety you want doesn't sell out. After you place your order, seed companies wait to send the potatoes until it's a good time to plant in your climate zone. Around here, the potatoes will arrive in early to mid-spring. Some people say that it is time to plant potatoes when the dandelions bloom!

Even though you could potentially grow potatoes from the grocery store, it is best to purchase certified seed potatoes for a few different reasons. First, many potatoes in the store have been treated so that they do not easily sprout (which extends their shelf life). Also, many seed potatoes are certified (we recommend purchasing this type), which means they test negative for disease. It can be very disappointing to lose a crop to disease – and potato diseases can continue to live in the soil, which means that healthy potatoes can't grow in that spot for many years. It's best to avoid this problem if at all possible! And finally, the number of seed potatoes available is staggering! It's a lot of fun to pick a unique variety that you can't find in the grocery store.

Like other crops, potato varieties look different from each other – from red to blue to creamy white or yellow on the inside, with brown, russet, red, or blue skins. They taste slightly different from variety to variety and have different textures – think creamy, sweet or starchy, light, fluffy, smooth, or waxy. And, they come in various sizes. With any type, some potatoes that you harvest will be larger than others. But fingerling varieties in particular are consistently smaller than “normal potatoes,” and often long and knobby.

One more consideration when selecting seed potatoes is when the plants will produce. Choose from early to late-season production, or get a few different varieties that are ready to harvest at different times, for a supply throughout the season. Some of our favorite varieties include: Yukon Gold, Kennebec, Purple Peruvian, and French Fingerling.

We'll talk more about planting potatoes when the time comes. For now, here are a couple of good seed source options:

- [The Maine Potato Lady](#)
- [Moose Tubers](#) (a division of Fedco Seeds)
- [Johnny's Selected Seeds](#)
- [Peaceful Valley](#)

