

Sweet Potato



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space slips 12 inches apart in ridges or rows that are 42 to 48 inches apart or 1 to 2 slips per 5-gallon container. Plant from mid-April through late June.

Soil: Amend with organic matter to create well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If the soil test shows the pH is below 6.2, apply lime as recommended.

For proper drainage in a container garden, use potting mix and ensure containers have drainage holes. Alternatively, consider using self-watering containers.

Water: Keep soil consistently moist, but not saturated. Apply 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Avoid wetting leaves to avoid fungal diseases. Mulch helps retain moisture.

Plant: Plant slips 2 to 3 inches deep.

Fertilize: In the absence of a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting, according to label directions. Reapply 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress), 4 to 6 weeks after planting.

Insects/Diseases/Weeds: Scout plants frequently for insect and disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, or worms). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

Harvest: Harvest at 100 to 120 days. Roots should be dug before harvest and placed in a shady, dry area to cure for 14 to 21 days. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

Other: Excessive applications of nitrogen or heavy applications of animal manures can result in low-quality, spindly roots.

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