

SPUDS & POTATOES



Potatoes are easy and satisfying to grow, typically yielding a good harvest. Poundland offer a range of seed potatoes to choose from, including First Early, Second Early and also main crop varieties.

Tools and things you will need:

- Rake
- Manure
- Hoe
- Liquid Fertilizer
- Fork

Potato Types:

First Early varieties:

Pentland Javelin - Good for salads, roasting

Rocket - Good for boiling

- Plant in the winter ready to harvest in the spring or early summer
- Plant from late February, protect with perforated film or fleece and keep well watered. For greenhouse forcing plant chitted tubers in 12in pots from late January
- First early potatoes should be planted in rows allowing about 30cm (1ft) between tubers, and 60cm (2ft) between rows
- The time between planting and lifting should be about 10 weeks

Second Early varieties:

Maris peer - Good for boiling, wedges, chips, salads

Charlotte - Good for roasting, boiling, salads

- Plant from early March for harvest from mid July (depending on variety). All varieties will store well
- Second Early potatoes should be planted in rows allowing about 45cm (18 inches) between tubers, and 75cm (2½ft) between rows
- The time between planting and lifting should be about 13 weeks
- If planted in late April potatoes can be harvested by mid-August, and this can continue through to October

Main crop varieties:

Maris Piper - Good for chips, roasting, jackets, wedges, mashing, boiling

King Edward - Good for chips, roasting, mashing

- Main crop potatoes are higher yielding than First and Second Early varieties and usually have larger tubers
- Main Crop Potatoes should be planted in rows allowing about 60cm (2ft) between tubers, and 75cm (2½ft) between rows

How to chit seed potatoes:

- Chitting is the name for the process that encourages tubers to sprout before planting
- Chitting potatoes is not essential except for Early varieties to produce an earlier maturing and heavier crop
- Place the seed potatoes in a clean egg box 'rose end up' (where the small buds can be seen) and place in a cool light place for 4-6 weeks
- By putting them in a light place, shoots will remain short, dark green and compact. When put in the dark, long, pale brittle shoots develop that can easily break off when planting

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Planting:

- Dates will vary from year to year and around the country. The soil temperature should be at least 6°C (43°F).
- Handle your chitted tubers with care, gently setting them into the trench (15 cm deep) with the shoots pointing upwards. Be careful not to break the shoots and then cover the potatoes lightly with soil.
- The shoots and leaves of potatoes are frost tender, so be prepared to protect them with cloches or fleece if frost is forecast.

Top tip! - A good indication for planting time is when grass and weeds begin to grow again after the Winter months, usually early March/April.

Harvesting:

- Harvest times depend on planting dates, weather and temperature at planting time, weather during the growing season, variety maturity and weather and temperature at harvest time
- Your home-grown potatoes should be ready for lifting from June until September, depending on the varieties and the growing conditions. Earlies can be lifted and eaten as soon as they're ready
- Second and Main Crop varieties can be kept in the ground much longer, until September, even though above ground growth may well be looking past its best
- Two weeks before you lift the crop, cut the growth off at ground level. This should give the skins of the potatoes sufficient time to toughen up, making them far less prone to damage from lifting and easier to store

Top tips!

- **Potatoes like plenty of sun, so avoid planting them in frost-prone sites, as these conditions can damage the developing foliage**
- **If you're short of space, try growing potatoes in an adequately drained container that's at least 30cm (1ft) deep and wide**
- **Always ensure you water once the tubers have reached the size of marbles. The size and quality of the crop will be reduced if you don't water your potatoes**

Storing your potatoes:

- The best potatoes for storage are the 'Main Crop' varieties – these typically have higher yields and a longer growing period than First or Second Earlies
- Choose a dry day to lift the potatoes, using a fork to lift them out and lay them on the soil to dry in the sunshine. Brush gently to remove excess soil
- Now they are ready for storage. Put any that are bruised, damaged or very small aside – these should be eaten sooner rather than later
- Only store dry, undamaged potatoes. Check regularly and remove any rotting tubers.
- A cool, dark shed is an appropriate place to keep potatoes: put them gently into potato sacks or paper bags (Don't use plastic)
- Potatoes will sprout if it's too warm for them, and rot if the temperature drops below freezing