

Meopham and
District
Allotments
Southdown
Shaw



Growing Potatoes

Site

- Frost free, sunny site
- Dig in Organic matter or WELL rotted manure Autumn/Winter preceding planting
- Grown as either earlies or maincrop
- Earlies can be harvested earlier than maincrop – often referred to as 'New' Potatoes • Maincrops take longer to grow and are harvested later in the year
- Maincrops are larger potatoes with a larger yield.

Production

Grown from seed potatoes or tubers, certified disease/virus free

Chitting – allowing potatoes to sprout prior to putting in the ground – considered appropriate for earlies. Plant when sprouts are 3cm long.

Time of sowing

- Plant in open ground once the risk of frost is over
- First Earlies - sow around late March
- Second Earlies - Early to Mid April
- Maincrops - mid to Late April

Planting

- Traditionally planted in rows
- Dig a narrow trench 12cm deep – or individually using bulb planter
- Earlies; 30cm apart in rows 60cm apart
- Maincrop; 37cm apart and in rows 75cm apart
- Apply General Purpose Fertiliser or -
- Organic fertiliser; add comfrey leaves to the base of the planting trench

Growing on

- When stems reach 25cm, earth up, drawing soil up around stems with a rake
- Repeat until reaches reach 30cm high
- Water well in dry weather
- Maincrop – use Nitrogen feed on second earthing up.
- Autumn manuring will add some nutrients, but most will leach out by the summer – the Allotment Association recommends adding 20kg of manure per square metre • Fertilise with an NPK ratio of 2:2:3

Growing Potatoes

Planting under polythene

- Plant through slits in black polythene
- Excellent for new potatoes – no earthing up, potatoes form below black plastic

Pots

- Large, deep containers can be used for small crops
- Fill container with 15cm compost, insert seed potato
- Add compost as the potato grows (earth up)

Harvesting

- First Earlies should be ready in June to July.
- Harvest when buds drop – tubers should be the size of a hens' egg
- Second Earlies – July to August
- Maincrops should be ready at the end of August through to October
- For maincrops harvest when the foliage turns yellow – cut it off – leave tubers in the ground for up to ten days
- Lift using a fork carefully avoiding damaging tubers
- If storing, leave on the surface of the soil for a few hours before collecting up
- Harvest rows and store

Storage

- Store healthy, disease free potatoes in a cool, dark, dry location