



Growing Great Sweet Potatoes

We recommend soaking your new slips in a glass of water for 3-5 days to hydrate and form new roots, before planting.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS: Sweet potatoes grow best in well-drained, sandy loam soils with a pH of about 6.5. High fertility is not required, but a loose sandy soil produces more uniform roots. Planting in raised beds will help with soil warming, drainage, and root development.

PLANTING: Plant slips 3–4 inches deep, leaves above soil, 10–18 inches apart (a wider spacing produces larger potatoes) in rows 36–60 inches apart. The most common spacing is 12 inches apart in rows 36–42 inches apart. Keep young plants weed free with shallow cultivation or mulching. Once the sweet potato plants are actively growing, they will smother out most weeds with a proliferation of runners. Do not trim or cut off the runners — they act as secondary roots, pulling water and nutrients from the soil.

HARVEST: Dig roots in fall before any hard frosts and before soil temperatures drop to 50°F/10°C. If plants get frosted, harvest roots as soon as possible – frost damage will travel from the plants and affect the roots. Cut back vines by hand or with a mower, and then dig roots by hand with a spading fork or mechanically with a bed lifter. Handle carefully to avoid injuring the skins. **STORAGE:** Sweet potatoes must be cured before storing to toughen skins and improve eating quality. Brush loose soil from the roots and cure in a warm, 85°F/29°C, dark, well-ventilated place with 85% relative humidity for 4-7 days. After curing, store in a cool, 60°F/16°C, dark place and avoid any unnecessary handling. Once cured, continuing to store the roots for an additional 3–4 weeks before eating allows for better sugar content. Properly handled roots can be stored for 7 months or more.



- **The leaves of sweet potato plants can also be moderately harvested to eat!**