

How To Plant & Grow Sweet Potatoes

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Posted: May 18, 2011



Sweet potatoes are commonly grown from bare root slips (also known as starts or sets). These are small plants that sprout from a mature tuber. They are then rooted in water. We sell the slips in bundles of 12. Keep the slips moist and plant them as soon as possible. When the ground has warmed and all danger of frost has passed, plant your slips 3-4" deep. Space them about 12-18" apart with 3-4' between rows. The vines will fill in, so give them plenty of room. Make sure the soil is loose and well drained. To give them a head start, you can plant them in raised rows, about 8" high. The soil will warm faster in a raised row and helps with drainage.

Sweet potato slips bruise easily and need gentle handling. Once planted give them a good soak. Water every day for about a week and then every few days until they get established. Sweet potatoes can be slow starters and they don't like to compete with weeds. Keep the area clear until the top growth fills in and acts as natural mulch.



Fertilizing sweet potatoes tends to produce more foliage than tubers so don't bother. Once established sweet potatoes are drought tolerant, but they will produce more if well watered.

Wireworms and root-knot nematodes are the biggest problems for sweet potatoes in home gardens. Avoid many diseases by choosing disease resistant varieties, using certified disease free seed sweet potatoes, and rotating their location from year to year. Mice can also be a problem, so be on the lookout.

Enjoy the beautiful foliage, which is edible and sometimes planted as an ornamental. In 90 to 130 days (depending on variety) you will have a delicious crop of sweet potatoes!

Tip: Avoid watering your sweet potatoes during the final 3-4 weeks prior to harvest to keep the mature tubers from splitting.