

# POTATOES, ONIONS, GARLIC



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## POTATOES:

Most garden soils are suitable for potatoes, although tubers produced on light, sandy loam usually have the most desirable shape and skin color. The soil must be well-drained and is best if it has a pH between 5.0 and 6.0. Add composted manure or 5-10-5 fertilizer to the soil before planting.

Buy only certified, disease-free tubers. Potatoes are propagated by cutting the tubers into pieces, allowing 1-2 "eyes" per piece. After cutting, cure the pieces in a cool (50-65 degrees), dry place for 2-3 days. In the garden, make trenches about 5" deep and 2'-3' apart. Place a potato piece every 8"-12". Cover with soil. The potatoes should sprout in 2-3 weeks. Plan on using about 7-8 lbs of tubers to plant a 100' row. Early varieties should be planted 10-14 days before the average date of last killing frost.

Later varieties should be planted 2 weeks later. Cultivate for weeds often but be careful not to hoe too deeply. When the plants reach a height of 6"-8", hill soil up around them to a depth of 4". This keeps weeds down and provides protection against green tubers caused by exposure to light. When the tops of the plants have withered and died down, the potatoes can be dug. Early varieties may be left in the ground for a few weeks after they are ready if the weather is not too hot or wet. Late varieties can be kept in the ground 3-4 weeks after the tops have died down. After digging, dry the potatoes for 2-3 days and store in a dark place at about 45 degrees. To control blight and other diseases, don't plant in previously infected soil. Spray potato plants every 7-10 days with Bordeaux Mix or Maneb. Colorado Potato Beetles are very common problem insects and can be controlled with Eight.

## ONIONS:

Onions can be grown on all types of soils although sand or silt loam is preferred. The soil should be well pulverized and have a pH between 5.8 and 6.5. Lower acidity retards growth. Incorporate manure and 5-10-5 fertilizer. Plant as early as possible after danger of severe frost is past. Buy seedling plants or onion sets at the nursery. Seedling plants are good for growing keeping onions and should be spaced 3"-4" apart in the row with 12"-15" between rows. Onion sets should be covered with about 1" of soil. Onions require continuous shallow cultivation to control weeds. When the bulbs reach a mature size and the plant tops break over, they are ready to be pulled. Dry the onions for 3-4 days and then cut off the tops about 1" above the bulb. Dry again for several days before putting them into storage. Store in a cool, well-ventilated, dry place. Onion maggots and thrips are common insect pests and can be controlled by spraying with a systemic insect killer early in the season. Use Maneb or Captan for disease control.

## GARLIC:

Garlic can be treated in the same way as onion sets. Garlic is usually ready to harvest in about 90 days.

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