

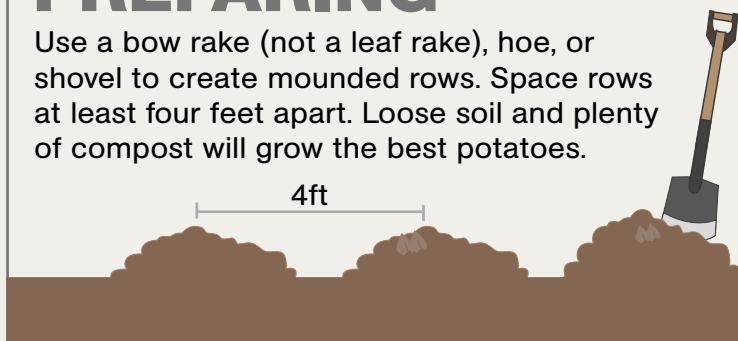


SWEET POTATOES

Easy to grow. Good to eat. Sweet potatoes are a perfect summer crop for Missouri gardens.

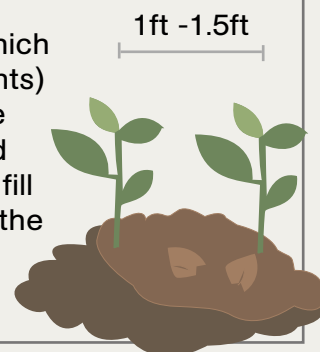
PREPARING

Use a bow rake (not a leaf rake), hoe, or shovel to create mounded rows. Space rows at least four feet apart. Loose soil and plenty of compost will grow the best potatoes.



PLANTING

Plant sweet potato “slips” (which are just sprouts or young plants) 1 foot to 1 ½ feet apart in the row. Dig a hole, place the end with roots in the ground, and fill the hole with soil. Make sure the growing tip and a couple of leaves are above ground.



WATERING

Water newly planted slips after planting and then on a weekly basis for the next couple of weeks as needed. Regular watering or rain will benefit plants during the summer but they can withstand hot and dry conditions.



GROWING

Weed early and often. The vines will spread and cover the ground completely. If you need more space, the vines can be trimmed. Give vines at least 2 ft. to grow on either side of row.



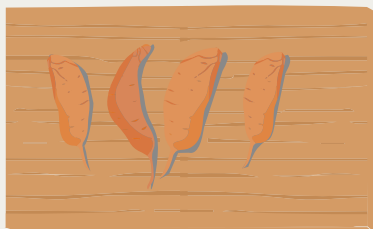
HARVESTING

Sweet potatoes don't like frost. Check them after 90-100 days, or harvest them **BEFORE** the first frost. Use a stiff tined fork to lift potatoes out of the ground. Gently brush off loose soil. Remove vines from potatoes with snips or scissors. **DO NOT** wash the potatoes.



CURING

Lay potatoes flat on screens or tables in an indoor, sheltered location to cure for ten days. If possible, keep them in a warm and humid spot to make them sweeter.



STORING

Layer potatoes with newspaper in a laundry basket or other ventilated box. Ideal storage conditions are 55 degrees F and 85% relative humidity.

