



An easy guide to growing potatoes

Potatoes are split into four groups but at our Trading Store we only stock three of them, first earlies, second earlies and maincrop. (We do not stock early maincrop.)

They are all grown in the same way, the difference is when you plant and harvest them.

Potatoes will grow in most soils but preferably a fertile, light soil in an open site not susceptible to late frosts.

There are four things to remember when growing potatoes:-

1. **Chitting** (encouraging the tuber to sprout which gives a quicker and slightly larger harvest) – Take your seed potatoes and lay them on a tray or in an egg box with the majority of ‘eyes’ (another name for buds) facing upwards. Keep them in a cool, frost-free (about 10°C), light place until the strong green shoots are about 4-5cm high. Rub off all but 3 or 4 shoots just before planting to maximise the size of your potatoes.
2. **Planting** – Add some general purpose fertiliser (Growmore) to the soil, following the manufactures recommended dosage and also some organic matter. Plant 8-12cm deep
3. **Protection** – Young plants need protection from late frosts otherwise you will get a later harvest with a smaller yield. You can either cover with a bit more soil or fleece if you have some.
To prevent potato blight it may be necessary to spray maincrop with a fungicide spray every fortnight from early summer.
4. **Earthing-up** – If any tubers are exposed to light they will turn green and be poisonous. To avoid this and to help support the stems you need to draw the soil up around the stems. To form a ridge about 20-30cm high. This is done gradually at the plants grow.

Group	Planting time	Planting distance		Harvest
First Earlies				
Arran Pilot Foremost Maris Bard Pentland Javalin Red Duke of York Rocket Sharpes Express	Late March	Rows 60cm apart	30cm between tubers	June/July Wait until the flowers open or the buds drop and the potatoes are about the size of a hen’s egg
Second Earlies				
Estima Charlotte (salad potato) Marfona Wilja	Early/mid April	Rows 60cm apart	30cm between tubers	Mid to late July Wait until the flowers open or the buds drop and the potatoes are about the size of a hen’s egg
Maincrop				
Cara Desiree Majestic Maris piper Pentland Crown Pink Fir Apple (salad potato)	April/May	Rows 75cm apart	40cm between tubers	September onwards when the foliage dies back. Lift the tubers and let them dry for several hours before putting them into storage