



Growing potatoes from True Potato Seed

General: One key to success and 3 great benefits:

1. Once plants started from true potato seed (TPS) are growing well in the field, all cultural recommendations are the same as with tuber-planted potatoes. The largest difference is that true potato seed is small, so getting the seedlings well-established is the key to success.
2. Another difference is that true seed is free from the pathogens that can infect tubers, so by starting with TPS you won't introduce diseases into your garden and your crop will start healthy.
3. True potato seed populations have great genetic diversity which results in beautiful natural mixes of internal and external color variations.
4. TPS ships and stores like regular seed - a fraction of the cost and many times the lifespan of conventional potato tubers!

Germination: Six weeks before date of last frost/desired transplant date sow seed ¼" deep in plug trays (~231 count) or maximum 2" pots with nutrient-free soil media (pH 5 – 7). Larger containers take longer to fill with roots and plants can start to produce tubers before transplant, which is not desirable. Maintain constant 70°F (21°C) without bottom heat, water so media remains evenly moist, and provide sufficient light for 12h days. Once all seeds have germinated (10 – 14 days) the plants can be moved to a cooler (above freezing) area and foliar or liquid fertilizer applied.

Gradually harden off one week before transplant.

Transplant: Plants are ready for transplant when they are ~2" tall. If transplant is delayed, consider potting up to a larger size to avoid stressing the plants and beginning tuber formation. Plant in a hill, flat top bed or trench (whatever is common for potatoes in your area) so only the top whorl of leaves (~1") is above the soil surface. If planning to harvest small potatoes, use 8" within and between rows, for larger potatoes 12" within and 30" between rows as a starting point and adjust based on experience.

Fertility: As potatoes. Nutrient uptake increases steadily as tubers form and enlarge. Look to foliar symptoms for fertility issues, nitrogen and potassium are important macro-nutrients and can be added, along with other fertilizer, during hilling as needed.

Water: Water in well to establish transplants and maintain soil moisture throughout the season. The soil surface should dry between watering, but moisture should be maintained in the soil profile.

Hilling: When plants are 4 – 6" tall soil can be hilled up around the base of the plant to cover the bottom 2/3. Hilling can be repeated 2 – 3 times as needed to keep down weeds and cover tubers. Pests/Disease: Use products labelled for potato. Chemicals, if used, should be tested on a small area first as plant sensitivity can vary considerably with soil and conditions.

Harvest: Potatoes should be ready for harvest 70 – 120 days after transplant, depending on planting density, environment, and size desired. If potatoes are to be eaten fresh, whole plants can be dug and tubers removed. For long term storage the plants should be cut to the ground 10 days before digging and tubers stored in a cool (40°F, 5°C), dark place with high humidity after harvest.