



One Seed Forward

GROW

Tatties

About *One Seed Forward*

One Seed Forward is a community growing initiative. We aim to encourage all ages to:

- Grow their own fruit and vegetables
- Share knowledge and any excess produce in their local community
- Eat seasonally and healthily

As a voluntary organisation our team come from a variety of backgrounds but all share a great enthusiasm for growing, gardening and being outdoors, and are aware of the physical, mental and social benefits this brings. We believe that small positive changes can make a real difference for individuals and communities. Our work is driven by these aims, interests and beliefs.

Amongst other things we:

- Give away free seeds and seedlings
- Offer volunteering opportunities to the general public and groups to benefit from being involved in aspects of growing
- Provide support to community groups to help get them started growing their own
- Work in partnership with other organisations with similar aims
- Offer opportunities for practical learning on our OSF allotment

We also have an educational programme - *OSF Garden Schools*. Please see our dedicated schools website for more information: www.osfgardenschools.co.uk



For more information about *One Seed Forward* please visit:

www.oneseedforward.co.uk



@OneSeedForward



oneseed_forward



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For more information about NESCAN visit:

<https://aberdeenclimateaction.org/nescan/>



**NESCAN
HUB**

Keep this booklet for future use or share with fellow growers

Introduction

We love potatoes!

They are one of the simplest things to grow and there is nothing quite like the excitement of harvest time when you put your fork in the ground (or tip out the soil if grown in bags and containers) to discover how much of a crop you have.

In the following pages we will give you some advice on how to grow and tend your potatoes and what to look out for during the growing season.

And if you have received some seed potatoes from us, let us know how you are getting on.

We have a Facebook group *OSF Growing Together* to share successes and failures, and to get online advice about your vegetable growing from fellow growers.



Please Help us Raise Funds

Help support the work of *One Seed Forward*. Choose us as your local cause when you shop at the Coop.

To find out more visit our:

- Coop fundraising page:
<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/60352>
- Website page by scanning the QR code



Chitting Potatoes



Whilst not absolutely necessary, seed potatoes, especially early varieties, will benefit from 'chitting'.

Chitting encourages the seed potatoes to sprout before planting and helps them grow faster once they are in the ground.

You can chit seed potatoes by putting them in shallow boxes or trays (egg boxes are ideal) and placing them in a cool but bright place to sprout (for example a windowsill).

If you look carefully you will see immature chits at one end of a seed potato – this is the 'rose end'. Put them in the trays with this end pointing upwards. In a few weeks strong shoots should have started to form and the tubers are ready for planting.

Growing in Bags & Containers

Potatoes can easily be grown in bags or containers. It's an ideal way to grow outside if you have limited space or no garden.

Potatoes can be grown in any bag or container if it is at least 30cm wide and deep, and has drainage holes.

The bags or containers should be placed in a bright, sunny position.

Plant 2 or 3 tubers in a large bag or container (30 litres or more) but only 1 tuber if you are using a smaller bag or container.



The recommended planting time is late March up until late May.

If a frost is expected you can put some scrunched up or shredded newspaper on top to protect the new shoots. You could plant earlier in a greenhouse but it must be frost-free.

If using a bag or container make sure the holes in the bottom are clear of the ground to let excess water out.

Planting in Bags

2

Put about 12-15 cm of multi-purpose compost (mix with soil to save a little money) into a bag or container

Make a few holes near the bottom of the bag - helps drainage

Place the tubers, with the shoots pointing upwards, into the top of the compost

1



3



6

Remember to label them so you know which variety is in the bag



4



5

Bed them in with a good soaking of water



When shoots appear cover with more compost- leave just the tips showing. As they grow keep adding more compost until it's near the top of the bag.

Another option: simply fill the bag with compost, push the tubers, rose-end upward, 12 cm down into the compost. Water and wait for them to grow!



Watering

Water frequently, particularly in dry weather – the compost should be damp but not sodden. Occasional heavy watering is better than little and often.



Re-using your Bag/ Container

If growing in a bag or container, once you have harvested your potatoes why not try growing onions or garlic in the same soil with some fresh compost mixed in?

You should use fresh compost each time you plant new seed potatoes in bags or containers.

Read about:

Potato Blight, Harvesting and Storing

on pages 9 and 10

Growing in the Ground

Potatoes do best in a sunny position on fertile and well-drained soil. Additionally:

- Avoid planting in the same position each year as this increases the risk of disease
- Ideally use a 4-year crop rotation cycle
- Prepare the soil by removing weeds and stones and then dig in plenty of well-rotted organic material (manure and/or compost)

Planting times are dependent on weather, soil conditions and regional variations. Generally speaking in the NE of Scotland, plant late March to late May when the risk of frost has passed.

Planting

Dig a trench about 15cm deep.

Place the seed potatoes into the trench with the end with the chits (the 'rose end') facing upwards.

Fill the trench with soil to cover the potatoes.

- First Earlies – plant 30cm apart in rows 60cm apart
- Second Earlies – plant 40cm apart in rows 60cm apart
- Maincrop – plant 45cm apart in rows 75cm apart

Potatoes should be 'earthed-up' as the shoots emerge from the ground to protect them from frost, which will blacken the shoots and slow growth. Draw soil over the top of the plant with a hoe.

Earthing Up

It's a good idea to earth-up the plants again when the stems are about 20-30 cm above ground - this will prevent potatoes near the surface of the soil turning green.

It also helps to stop spores from any blight (see below) being washed into the soil and affecting the tubers.

Caution!

Whether grown in a bag, container, or the ground:



If plants show signs of blight (a disease affecting potatoes – brownish black spots appear on leaves and stems):

- Cut the stems and leaves off - doing this stops the spores washing into the soil and affecting the tubers
- Don't compost the affected stems and leaves



Tubers exposed to sunlight will turn green. Don't eat green potatoes – they contain a toxic alkaloid, which can cause illness and stomach upsets.

The leaves and tomato like fruits are also poisonous.

Harvesting

When you lift your crop will depend on the growing season, weather conditions and size of potatoes you want.

- **First Earlies** can be harvested as 'new potatoes' after at least 10 weeks
- **Second Earlies** should be ready after about 13 weeks
- **Maincrop** varieties 16-20 weeks after planting

Potatoes will generally get larger the longer they grow.

Maincrop potatoes can be left in the ground for at least two weeks after the leaves and stems have withered – this allows the skins to harden, which helps them store better. Cut the stems off to just above the soil surface when the leaves die back.

Try to harvest on a sunny day when the soil is dry. Leave the tubers on the surface of the soil for a few hours to dry and help the skins harden.



Storing

When the potatoes are dry, store them in paper or hessian sacks in a cool, dark place. Don't store them in plastic bags as they will sweat and rot.