



## How to Grow Sweet Potatoes in Vermont



- Sweet potatoes are grown from slips, which are cuttings from a parent vine. The slips grow best in a loose, sandy or silty soil that drains well. If sweet potatoes are grown in a rich dark soil they may discolor but are still good to eat.
- Transplant the slips into garden beds during June, preferably in the late afternoon or on an overcast day. When transplanting, lay the slips on their sides with 2/3 of the slip buried a half inch under the soil. Water enough to keep the soil moist, but not saturated.
- Plant the slips 10 to 18 inches apart in rows that are three to four feet apart. The rows or raised bed should be elevated 4 to 8 inches above the ground level to allow the sweet potatoes room to form.
- Keep the cuttings watered while they are getting established. The leaves that were originally on the planted slips will dry up and fall off leaving just the vine stem. New leaves will emerge from the cuttings as the slips become established.
- The sweet potato vines will cover the ground reaching 5 to 10 feet in length. Hoe around the vines to cultivate weeds and mulch with hay if desired.
- Deer love sweet potato leaves, so be sure your planting area is fenced if deer are a problem. A flying gold colored beetle may chew round holes in the leaves. The vines are tough and will keep growing despite insect damage.
- Sweet potatoes are dug and harvested in late September through mid October, a day or two before the first predicted frost. Most of the sweet potatoes will be just below the parent plant. Each plant can produce up to six sweet potatoes.
- After harvesting, dry the sweet potatoes on the ground for two or three hours. Allow them another 10 to 14 days to cure at room temperature or above, before storing the sweet potatoes at a temperature between 50 and 60 degrees F.
- Unlike Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes should not be kept cold in a garage, refrigerator or outbuilding. If properly cured and stored, they will keep until April. Enjoy!