

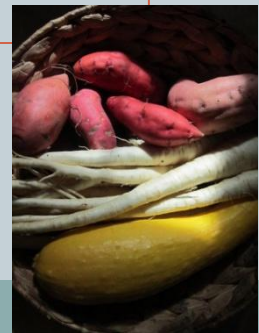
Growing Sweet Potatoes in Manitoba



Sweet Potato Facts



- **Sweet potatoes are members of the morning glory family (Ipomoea Batatas) and not related to potatoes (solanceae).**
- **Often incorrectly marked and wrongly called Yams (Dioscorea).**
- **Oldest known cultivated root vegetable, similar to a carrot in that it is the nutrient filled root that we harvest rather than a true tuber.**
- **Highly nutritious super food that boasts a low glycemic index also rich in fiber , Antioxidants ,vitamins and minerals.**
- **When cured properly and stored around 13-18 degrees, they can last for up to a year.**



Young sweet potato plants “slips”



**PREMIUM LOCAL SLIPS ENSURE THE
BEST START AND ARE GROWN FREE
FROM ANY CHEMICALS**

**HEALTHY SLIPS WITH STRONG
ROOTS, HELP PLANTS ESTABLISH
QUICKLY AS SOON AS THEY REACH
NUTRIENTS IN WARM SOIL**

**SIMPLY STORE ROOTED SLIPS IN
CLEAN WATER AND MODERATE
LIGHTING UNTIL IT IS TIME TO
PLANTING OUT IN THE GARDEN**



How they grow

Vigorous plants stand only 6 inches tall with sweet edible roots forming within 18 inches below the main stem

8-12 roots will mature from one plant

Sweet potatoes grow successfully in well drained moderately fertile soil

An over abundance of nutrients is not recommended and will lead to tender skin and lush foliage at the expense of root size

- Sweet potatoes demand heat and the roots themselves are easily damaged by temperatures below 10 degrees.
- Leaves and vines are not frost tolerant but can withstand cooler temperatures than the actual roots.
- 3-4 foot vines sprawl from the main stem yet lack any sort of tendrils to grab hold.
- When growing happily they can also re-root into the soil and tap into extra nutrients at any point along the vine.
- These plants are tough and extremely determined, they need very little encouragement and maintenance to fulfill their task of making sweet potatoes.
- Eager to grow strong roots systems allows them to tap deep into the soil making them fairly drought tolerant and able to withstand extreme prairie temperatures.



Covington is a popular orange fleshed variety that demands more nitrogen than some varieties.



What to expect in Manitoba



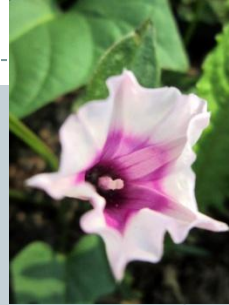
Challenges

- Only thrive in hot conditions
- Long growing season
- Edible leaves
- Not frost tolerant
- Relatively tender vegetable to harvest
- Need to be cured indoors
- Having just enough time in our growing season means that sweets grown in Manitoba will not likely reach the mammoth sizes we see in stores

Why it is worth it

- Thrive in hot and dry prairie summers.
- Light feeders content with average soil, even clay.
- Minimal effort and attention required while growing.
- Most of the diseases and pests that affect sweet potatoes in the south are not a concern here because of our cold climate.
- Easy to grow without the use of chemicals.
- 90/100 day varieties are quite happy with amount of heat units that our summers can offer.
- Fun and simple and very rewarding to grow.
- Home grown sweet potatoes can provide 2-4 lbs each.
- Sweets raised in our region generally provide a more petite gourmet size and as a result have tender skin that need not be peeled.
- Locally grown sweet potatoes are unique, and considered a prized addition for growers.
- Healthy locally available starter plants allow for a better chance of a successful crop.
- Home grown fresh sweet potatoes are un-matched in flavor, nutrition and quality.

Tips to ensure great results



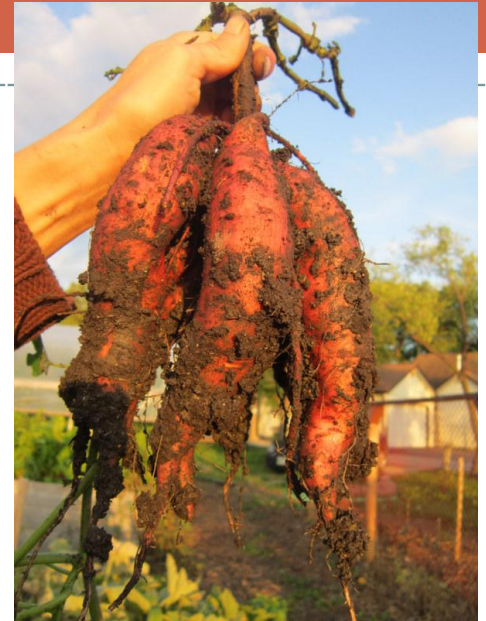
- loose soil
- Full sun exposure
- Capitalize on a micro climate
- Slightly raised rows
- Plant in warm soil
- Water well until established
- Plant directly through holes in black plastic mulch
- Cover with row cover or cold frame for first 2 weeks

- Ensure ample water supply while roots are bulking up
- Do not overwater in the last 2 weeks
- Leave in the ground as long as possible without causing chill damage
- Cover for frost as with tomatoes
- Play close attention to dropping fall temperatures
- Harvest immediately if vines are killed by frost
- Plan to dig when overnight lows don't outweigh the daytime highs.
- When summer is officially over and the gardens are almost all but cleared out, that is when to dig for sweet potatoes!

Harvesting

Keep them in the ground as long as possible

90-100 growing days



**KNOWING WHEN TO HARVEST
IS THE TOUGHEST PART OF
GROWING SWEET POTATOES
IN MANITOBA**

Harvest sweet potatoes in early to mid October when warm days have passed and cool nights are imminent

Soil temperature should remain above 10 degrees to prevent damage



SWEETS DO MOST OF THEIR BULKING UP IN THE LAST MONTH OF GROWTH SO IT IS CRUCIAL THAT THEY ARE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN THE SOIL AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

WHEN DAYS ARE STILL WARM AND NIGHTS DON'T DIP BELOW FREEZING, SOIL CONTINUES TO HOLD HEAT AND INSULATE THE ROOTS.





Curing sweet potatoes

Starches convert to sugar during the curing process.

75-85 degrees for 3-7 days also matures the skin and heals small wounds.

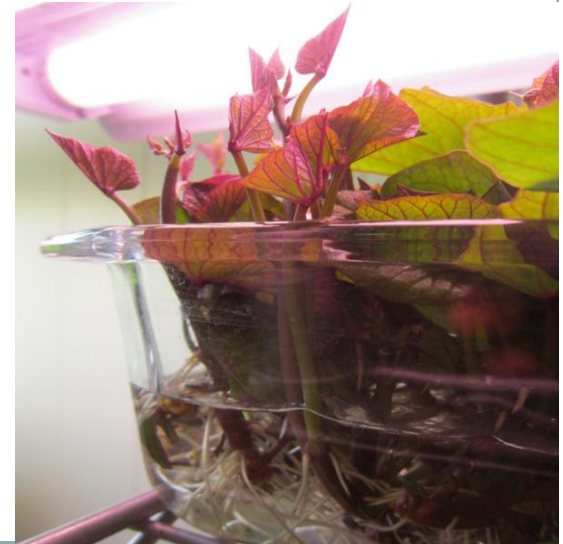
Sweets can now be stored at 55-65 degrees for up to a year.

Without proper curing sweets will lack sugar and not store well.

Humidity levels 75%-85 % are optimal.

How to care for your bounty

- Cut vines off plant then carefully locate and remove sweets from the soil. Take care to not damage skin or snap tender roots.
- Keep in mind their low tolerance for temperatures below 10 degrees take care to protect them from chill damage.
- Wash with warm water and allow to dry thoroughly.
- Finish your sweet potatoes with a simple curing process.



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