

EXPERIMENTING WITH SWEET POTATOES

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DAKOTA GARDENER



DIANE & PAUL FROM WISCONSIN



Heritage raspberries & Dakota
Rose watermelon

SWEET POTATOES

Scientific name: Ipomea Batatas

- In the morning glory family
- Native American crop
- High in calcium, potassium, Vitamins A and C

In contrast:

- Standard potatoes are from the nightshade family
- Yams are grown in West Africa & the Caribbean and are not available in the U.S.

SWEET POTATOES ARE GROWN WITH "SLIPS"

A. Grow your own slips from a rooted sweet potato from last year's crop beginning in January.

1. Spear a sweet potato from previous year with wooden skewers.
2. Partially submerge in a jar filled with water and wait for sprouts and vines to appear.
3. Root pieces of the "slips" in planting medium using root stimulator or in water.
4. Plant in garden.



OR...

- Place a sweet potato in a plastic tub and cover with gravel and a lid.
- Place tub under the kitchen sink.
- Wait for slips to emerge.



Sweet potato slips. Photo by
Malgorzata Florkowska, UGA
Bateman

B. PURCHASE BARE-ROOT SLIPS

- Packs of 25 slips can be ordered from seed companies.
- This year slips shipped about May 25.
- Plant slips directly in ground when the ground is 70° F. or after Memorial Day.

C. BUY A POTTED SLIP

- Easiest way to begin.
- Hopefully, be able to save one sweet potato in the fall to grow spring slips.
- Recommended varieties: Beauregard*, Covington*, and Georgia Jet. All shorter maturity. Good keepers

WHERE TO PLANT

- Silty or sandy loam soil. LIGHT soil
- Well drained.
- 8-10 hours of sun. Like HEAT.
- Plant when soil temperature is 70° F.
- Need 1 inch of water/week.
- Growing season of 90-110 days.
- Best to plant in ridges 2 ft. wide and 10 inches high. (Easier digging.)
- Plant 10 inch slip 6 inches deep, 12-18 inches apart.
- Could mulch with black plastic.

NORTHERN SWEET POTATO CULTURE ISSUES

- If soil isn't light enough, no sweet potatoes will grow but will be misshapen.
- If given too much fertilizer, will only produce vines.
- If the soil isn't light enough and ridged, difficult to dig.
- Vines branch out and are trip hazard.
- Hard to weed when vines grow.

MY MICROCLIMATE OR THE KILN

- Planting medium: Miracle-Gro Potting Soil
- Watered every day or two.



SQUIRRELS

- Squirrels do dig in and kill sweet potatoes in Miracle-Gro Potting Soil.



RESULTS

- 8-10 lbs. of sweet potato/plant.
- Dug with hands and a hand spade before frost.



A RAISED BED FROM A GALVANIZED CULVERT

- Half Miracle-Gro & half sandy loam.
- Watered every 2-3 days.
- Fertilized with Osmocote.
- Tubers do not grow deep.
- The vines trail, so it ends the trip hazard.



HARVESTING

- Beginning of September reduce watering.
- Dig before a hard frost.
- Handle gently as are tender.



SISU Extension Service.



ONE YEAR'S BOUNTY



CURING TO HEAL POTATOES FOR LONG-TERM STORAGE

1. Gently rub off the loose dirt.
2. Lay out on card board in an unheated (85 F/mod. humidity) building for 1-2 weeks to heal cuts.
3. Store in an open card board box in basement (between 50-60 F).
4. Hopefully, have one sweet potato left to grow slips from in January.



Sweet potatoes after harvest. Photo by Robert Waterfield, UGA Extension.



PESTS ARE FEW

- Usually insect free. Can attract flea beetles, Japanese beetles, and wireworms.
- Practice annual crop rotation.



MY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Plant in well-drained, raised bed 18-24 inches high.
- Situate the raised bed for 8-10 hours of sun.
- Use a combination of potting soil, compost, &/or sandy loam.
- Fertilize bed every year with Osmocote.
- Water every 2 days.

LOUISIANA SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

Mix:

- ½ C. sugar
- 6 T. softened butter
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1/3 C. milk
- Add: 3 C. cooked sweet potatoes, mashed.
- Put in greased 9" x 13" pan.

TOPPING:

- Mix and sprinkle on top of above.
- 3 T. melted butter
- ½ C. lt. brown sugar
- ¼ C. flour
- ½ C. chopped pecans

BAKE at 350 F for 25 minutes.

RESOURCES

- Interview with Gil Salm. June 24, 2020.
- "Home Garden Sweet Potatoes." extension.uga.edu. Accessed June 6, 2020.
- Johnny's Select Seeds.
- "Sweet Potato Basics." sdstate.edu. Accessed June 6, 2020.