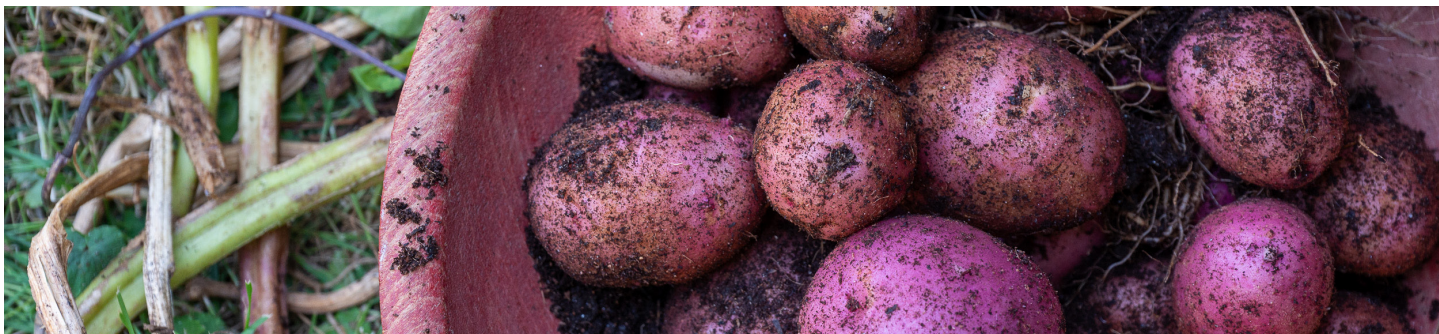


HOW TO GROW POTATOES IN A BAG



SUPPLIES

- Seed potatoes: six to eight per bag
- Coconut coir (a sustainable alternative to peat)
- Burlap sack or woven fiber grow bag, 50-quart size
- Compost (homemade or bagged)

INSTRUCTIONS



STEP 1: GET SEED

Fresh potatoes grow from mature ones, so you start your crop with seed potatoes, which are spuds with at least one “eye.” (They may be mini potatoes or chunks of larger ones.) You can cut up and use potatoes from the grocery store, but they may be treated with an anti-sprouting agent that will inhibit their growth. It’s better to get your seed potatoes

from a garden center or mail-order supplier because they will be ready to grow, and you’re likely to have more variety choices. Fingerling potatoes—the modest-size, colorful, and flavorful oblong types—work especially well in bags.



STEP 2: BLEND MEDIUM

Thoroughly mix equal parts of coir and finished compost in a tub or bucket; then pour the blend into the bag until you have a base layer about 3 inches deep. Water it until moist.

HOW TO GROW POTATOES IN A BAG (CONTINUED)



STEP 3: PLACE POTATOES

Set six to eight seed potatoes on top of the compost mix in the bag. Leave space between each of them to allow their roots to spread out. Cover the potatoes with about 2 inches more of the compost mix, and water until everything is damp.



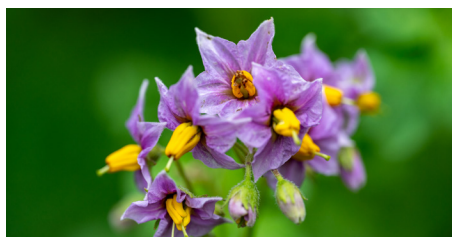
STEP 4: DAMPEN AND COVER

Allow the compost mix to become almost dry and then water it again. Try to keep it evenly moist but not soggy. In one to two weeks, you'll see leafy green stalks emerging. Add more of the compost mix to cover the stalks all the way up to the lowest leaves.



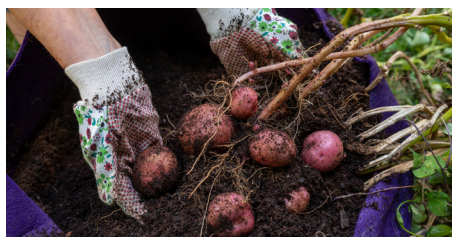
STEP 5: TOP OFF

Continue adding compost mix every week or two as the stalks grow, filling the bag up so just the leaves are showing. Be sure that any tubers you see are well covered; exposure to sunlight turns them green and inedible. You can stop adding the mix when the bag is full.



STEP 6: LOOK FOR BLOOMS

In about six weeks, you will see tiny flowers on the plants. If you harvest your crop at this point, you'll have small, extra-tender, "new" potatoes to enjoy, but they must be eaten within a couple of days. They are likely to rot if you try to store them.



STEP 7: DIG IN

For fully mature potatoes, keep the compost mix damp and wait a few more weeks until the leaves and stalks wilt and turn brown. Then it's time to harvest. Gently turn the bag on its side and dump out the contents. Use your hands (and ask the kids to join in!) to root through the pile and find the buried treasure: your homegrown potatoes! Allow them to dry in a cool, dry place away from direct light for a few days so their skins toughen up, or cure. Brush off the dirt but don't wash the potatoes until you're ready to eat them. Cured spuds can be stored for a few weeks.