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POTATOES

CERTIFIED: Use only seed potatoes identified as Certified Seed Potatoes to help assure good production and freedom from inherent diseases. Do not use potatoes that you buy at the supermarket. These have often been treated with a chemical to keep them from sprouting.

CUTTING & SEED TREATMENT: These potatoes may be planted whole if they are small or they may be cut into pieces with 2 or more eyes to increase plant stock. If cut, allow cut surface to dry or "heal." Cut your potatoes at least 24 hours before planting. Dust with Captan to prevent rotting.

PLANTING: Soil temperatures should be above 40 degrees F before planting. Space rows about 3-4 feet apart, with the seed pieces about 1 foot apart in the row. Seed potatoes should be planted 3-4 inches deep.

CULTIVATION: As the plant grows, "hill up" in order to prevent new potatoes from being exposed to sunburn or frost. If they are exposed, they will turn green. Do not completely cover the plant foliage. Water only when the soil needs it. Keep them evenly moist at all times. Alternating wet and dry periods can cause abnormalities. A good all purpose fertilizer (such as Dr. Earth All Purpose) is recommended and suitable for this area. Apply as per label instructions.

HARVESTING: Potatoes can be dug and used at any time once they begin to develop. The small potatoes dug early are very tasty for immediate use, but they will not store for more than two weeks. If potatoes are to be stored for winter use, dig after the foliage as died down or has been killed by frost. Let the tubers lie on the top of the ground for 4-6 hours to dry out and toughen the skin.

POTATO SCAB: To discourage potato scab, don't use lime or wood ashes in the potato bed. Rotate planting areas so you won't plant the same area for three years if possible. Potato scab infected potatoes are still safe to eat, just not attractive.

VARIETIES

RED NORLAND: Early maturing (65+ days). If you are anxious for the first red potato from your garden, this is the one you want. Very smooth skin, white flesh, good yield of medium to large size, consistent tubers, shallow eyes, stores well.

RED PONTIAC: Mid-season (80+ days). Deep red skin. White flesh. Tuber of choice for mashed potatoes, fresh eating. Let set in the ground one week or so after maturing to let the skin firm up.

YUKON GOLD: Extra early (55+ days). Excellent keeper. Delicious yellow flesh. Attractive smooth thin yellow skin and uniform yields. Shallow eyes. Lends itself well to any method of preparation.

KENNEBEC: Mid-season (80+ days) - Light tan skin, shallow eyes, white flesh, consistent and good keeper. The Maine potato.

WHITE ROSE: Early maturing (65+ days) - Excellent white potato with an average yield. This is the one sold in stores as the "new boiling" potato. Best if harvested while small and used in potato salads and steamed.

RUSSET: Mid-season (80+ days) - this is the potato that Idaho built its reputation on. Most widely grown potato in the US. Best used for baked potatoes.

