

Potato, sweet

(*Ipomoea batatas*)

Recommended Varieties

Dry-fleshed (yellow)

Jersey

Moist-fleshed (yams)

Garnet (dark red)

Jewel (deep orange)

Sweet potatoes grow best in light, sandy soils and are sensitive to temperatures below 50°F. For this reason, sweet potatoes do not grow well along the north coast or in the northern sections of the state.

Grow sweet potatoes from sprouts or slip produced by the following method: place small sweet potatoes in a hotbed about March 1; cover with 3 to 4 inches of sand; keep the bed moist. Maintain a soil temperature of 70°F to 75°F in the hotbed. In about 6 weeks, sprouts about 8 inches long are ready for transplanting. Pull the sprouts and transplant them to raised beds. You may grow several crops of sprouts from the same planting. After setting out the sprouts, apply several light irrigations throughout the growing season.

You can harvest sweet potatoes when slightly immature if they are of suitable size; otherwise leave them in the ground until the roots are full grown and the vines begin to turn yellow. However, if the leaves are killed by frost before they yellow, cut them off; dig up the roots; and store them at once in boxes in a warm, moist place. Do not bruise the roots when digging, as this increases the possibility of decay. Sweet potatoes improve during storage because a part of the starch content turns to sugar.

Nutritional Value of Sweet Potato

Serving size:	4 oz. Baked	<u>Primary Nutrients</u>	<u>%RDA(m)</u>	<u>%RDA(f)</u>	
Calories	118	Vitamin A	2,488 RE	249	311
Fat	0.1 g	Vitamin C	28 mg	47	47
Calories from fat	0.8%	Vitamin B6	0.28 mg	14	17.5
Cholesterol	0	Folic Acid	26 mcg	13	14
Sodium	12 mg	Riboflavin	0.15 mg	9	11.5
Protein	2.0 g	Magnesium	23 mg	7	8
Carbohydrate	27.7 g	Iron	0.52 mg	5	3.5
Dietary Fiber	3.4 g	Thiamine	0.08 mg	5	7
				<u>% Min. Requirement</u>	
		Potassium	397 mg	20	

Problem Diagnosis for Sweet Potato

See General Problem Diagnosis for Vegetables -(Table 5) for general techniques to recognize and manage the common problems associated with sweet potato. Nematodes, aphids, flea beetles, leafhoppers, and wireworms cause problems in sweet potato plantings.