

GROW YOUR OWN POTATOES



Potato plant health

Potatoes need light, water, food, space and the correct temperature to grow. Here are some tips to help you grow a good crop.

Light or shade?

Potato plants prefer not to be in direct, bright sunlight but, equally, do not like to be in extreme shade, so it's important that the plant gets enough light to thrive but not too much, which could either burn the leaves or result in the soil drying out.



Find the right spot to grow your potatoes

Winds and storms

Extremes of windy weather can cause windburn on leaves, break off stems and generally affect the plant growth. A sheltered but bright spot is the ideal place for growing your potatoes and protecting them from wind or storm damage.



Find a sheltered but bright spot

Fungal infections

Potato plants can be infected by fungus, such as blight. Early indications are brown blotches on the leaves with white mould blight spots underneath. Infected plants should be removed, bagged and disposed of.



Bag it, bin it, burn it!

Frost

Frost can severely hinder plant growth and delay potato development. Light frosts can cause yellow patches on leaves, and heavier frosts will turn stems black. Cover plants or bring indoors if a frost is expected.



Frost watch! Bring bags inside if a frost is likely

Watering – too much or too little?

Potato plants prefer a warm, moist environment. Too little water will dry out the plant. Too much will waterlog and rot the potatoes. A handy tip is to test the soil to a depth of up to 5cm and gently water if the soil is dry. Do not water if soil is already wet.



Water plants little but often

Ants and aphids

Heavy infestations of aphids (greenfly) can cause leaves to turn brown and may also spread unwanted fungal infection. Ants like to 'farm' aphids for their sweet, sticky residues they create by sucking sap from the plant. Remove aphids where possible to discourage this activity.



Discourage ants by removing aphids

Green potatoes

Potato tubers that are not protected from the light when developing will turn green, which affects the taste. Make sure that any tubers near the surface are covered with soil. Cut away any green parts of the potatoes before cooking.



Top up bags and keep potato tubers covered

Slugs and snails

Slugs and snails thrive in heavy soils and wet conditions. Using a good quality compost and careful watering will alleviate this problem. Any slugs or snails found should be removed as they will damage the plants and the new tubers.



Remove unwanted visitors!

Further information on the care and healthy growing of potatoes can be found on the website detailed below.

