

Vine Cuttings and Transplanting Sweetpotatoes

- Plants sprouting from sweetpotato storage roots are called slips. A sweetpotato storage root can produce about 20-40 slips depending upon the time you allow for growth.
- When the slips have about 4-5 leaves and the stem is sturdy, cut the slip 1/2 to 1 inch above the base.
- Place the slips in a container with water so that the bottom half is submerged in water and place the container in a sunny and warm area or window.
- When the plants develop enough roots, transplant them to your garden when the danger of frost has passed.



Slips growing from sweetpotato storage roots



Vine cutting from sweetpotato storage root



Vine cuttings submerged in water for rooting

General Field Production Methods

- **Spacing:** 12 inches spacing between plants.
- **Plastic mulch:** Cover the bed with black plastic mulch to warm the soil and control weeds.
- **Fertilizer:** Apply the fertilizer several days before transplanting at the rate of 100 lb N per acre. For each 20 feet of row, place one-half pound of 10-20-10 fertilizer in the bed.
- **Irrigation:** Irrigate approximately 1/2 inch per acre once per week for 25-30 days after transplanting, to encourage root development. Thereafter, irrigate during dry periods. Do not wet soil too much as this can cause root rotting. Stop irrigation 1 week prior to harvest.
- **Harvest:** Sweetpotatoes can be harvested any time after storage roots are large enough, usually 90-120 days after transplanting. A shovel or spade fork can be used for digging. Minimize skinning and bruising the sweetpotatoes during harvesting. Do not leave sweetpotatoes exposed to sun for more than one hour.

Post-harvest Management

- **Curing:** Curing should start the same day as harvest. Allow the soil on the sweetpotato surface to dry then shake off any excess soil. Do not wash the roots. Cure by storing in a warm, humid room, 80-90 °F temperature and 80-90% relative humidity, for about 2 weeks. These exact conditions will be hard to establish around the home, so select a site that comes close to these conditions, and cure for longer. Properly cured sweetpotatoes should feel firm.
- **Storage:** After curing is complete, store sweetpotatoes at 55-60 °F. Cured sweetpotatoes can be wrapped in newspaper or a paper bag and stored in a cool closet or unheated storage room. Properly cured and stored sweetpotatoes will last 6 months or more.



Sweetpotato in early season



Sweetpotato in late season



Harvesting sweetpotato with a shovel



Harvested sweetpotatoes

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