



Grow your own naturally blight resistant potato and tell us how you got on.

We would like you to try out these new varieties of potato that are easy to grow and require no spraying with pesticide. The research sheet allows you to tell us how you found them. Naturally blight resistant potatoes are bred conventionally to be resistant to late-blight and virus diseases. They have vigorous, weed suppressing foliage and the tubers will keep easily into the spring if stored in a dry, frost-free shed.

The objective of this project is to engage as many people as possible in action-based research and to learn from each other why we prefer to grow, buy and eat certain varieties of potatoes on this island.

Why not grow your potatoes in a place where they can be seen and hopefully encourage others to do the same. Share your experience and make the research fun: organise a potato-tasting party for family and friends to invite comments, start a potato blog, try growing several varieties in your community garden to compare the results...

We welcome additional documentation of your research project using the medium of your choice (stories, photography, video, artwork, etc.).

Basic advice about how to grow potatoes

You have been supplied with certified seed potatoes that are as free of pests and diseases as possible. Best results are usually obtained by growing potatoes on a well cultivated soil that has not grown potatoes recently (within the last 3-4 years). Organic matter (muck, compost, seaweed, etc) added to the soil will help to increase nutrients and help to conserve soil moisture.

Traditional methods can be used: weed and cultivate the ground and dig in any organic matter and add any nutrients. Dig a shallow trench (10cm or 4 inches deep) and place seed potatoes in the trench about 35cm (14 inches) apart. Rows should be spaced about 75cm (30 inches) apart. Fill in the trenches and as the plants grow, heap up the soil around the plants to produce a ridge from the furrow between the rows. Alternatively, the plot can be left unridged and a mulch applied around the plants to prevent the new potatoes poking out of the soil and getting green. Keeping the plants moist by watering in dry weather prevents the new potatoes from getting scab disease on the surface of the potato.

Naturally blight resistant will be ready to harvest from August onwards but plants will grow into September and October. The potatoes can grow too large and develop cavities (hollow heart) so dig up one or two plants in late August and if size is big enough for your uses, then carefully pull out the foliage and leave the potatoes in the soil to form a thicker skin for three weeks. Then you can harvest on a dry day. Dried off potatoes should be stored in Hessian or paper bags to keep out the light and keep them from becoming green when they are dangerous to eat because of the production of toxic substances. Potatoes hate polythene bags.

**Details of research team**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

How did you hear about SPUDS?

Why are you interested taking part in this research project?

What type of potato grower are you?

Newcomer ☐

Experienced ☐ If yes, how many years? _____

Are you growing for:

Yourself/family ☐

Commercial ☐

Fill in as much of this sheet as you can but any information is important to us

Which blight resistant variety did you grow: _____

Date of planting ____/____/____

Were the potato seed chitted indoors before planting? _____

For those growing in containers: _____

What were the approximate sizes of the containers? _____

How many seed tubers were planted per container? _____

Were containers filled with:

Garden Soil ☐

Commercial Compost ☐

Other ☐ _____

Did you dig in soil improvers like:

Animal manure ☐

Garden compost ☐

Fertilizer – what kind? ☐

Other ☐ _____

Photographic documentation:

Take a photo of you and your family/friends at planting



For those growing in a plot in the garden:

Where is your plot located?

County ☐ Town ☐

What type of plot is it?

Farm field ☐

Backyard ☐

Community garden ☐

Allotment ☐

Other ☐ _____

Is the plot close to sea?

Approximate distance _____

When was the last time potatoes were grown in this plot? _____

Did you dig in soil improvers like:

Animal manure ☐

Garden compost ☐

Fertiliser – what kind? ☐ _____

Other ☐ _____

CULTIVATION and PROGRESS

Actions

Did you add a mulch after plants had started to grow? What type?

Earth ☐ April ☐ May ☐ June ☐ July ☐ Aug ☐ Sept ☐ Oct ☐

Compost ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Straw ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Other _____ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Did you fertilize?

What type? _____

Did you water?

How much? _____

Did you have to remove weeds?

Did you note any blight on the foliage?

Did you note any other diseases or damage from slugs or wireworm (holes in the tubers)?

What type? _____

Were there blight warnings?

What were the weather conditions? _____



Details of Harvest(s)

Date of harvest _____

Number of plants (of each variety harvested) _____

Total weight (of each variety) _____

Weight of good quality edible potatoes in each batch _____

Weight of rejects? _____

What was main reason for rejection:

Greens ☐ Rots ☐ Cracks ☐ Too small ☐

Other ☐ _____

TASTE TEST

Description of Taste:

Cook your potatoes however you want: boil, steam, roast, mash, bake, or fry. If you have problems with them falling apart when boiled, try boiling them in their skins or steaming them. You can make fine mashed potatoes in the microwave: when the potato is soft, cut in half and squeeze through a potato ricer. Skins are left in the ricer! Cooking assessments: potatoes will cook differently after various lengths of storage

How long after harvest did you do your cook tests? _____

What method did you use to cook them and did you cook a non blight resistant potato variety at the same time for comparison? _____

How did they taste?

Poor ☐ Grand ☐ Yummy ☐

Did tasters disagree about these taste scores? _____

Give reasons your score. _____

Would you grow these varieties again? _____

Give reasons your answer. _____

For further information and support please check out:

www.spuds.ie
www.sarvari-trust.org/
www.gjiireland.com

Completed SPUDS data sheets should be returned to:

SPUDS, c/o The Lifeline Project, 44 Sitric Road, Dublin 7

