

How to...

# Grow Potatoes in Potato Growing Bags



When growing potatoes in bags, you first need to decide which type to grow, whether they are First Earlies or Second Earlies. Once this is decided, you can then get ready to plant your tubers at the correct planting time:

**First Earlies - from end February**  
**Second Earlies - from mid March**

Once you have bought your seed potatoes, it is very important to keep them in a frost free environment. Remove them from their packaging as soon as you get them home and spread them out in a cool, well ventilated place before chitting.

## **Chitting**

All potatoes will benefit from chitting, but particularly First Earlies and Second Earlies. The growing of chits over the next few weeks is very important as it gives faster growth and a heavier crop once planted out. The best way to chit your potatoes is to stand them in a seed tray or empty egg carton, in a light, cool spot for six weeks,

during which time short hard shoots (chits) will form. You will notice that all your chits will appear at one end. Keep the potatoes chit up in a cool, frost free position in natural light until the chits are about one inch in length.

## **Planting**

Set three tubers into the top of 15–20cm of compost in a planting bag, and then cover the tubers with about 10cm of compost and fertiliser mixed together. Start the bags off in a greenhouse until all signs of frost have passed then place the bags outside in a light, warm sunny position.

As the potatoes grow through the surface, carefully keep adding compost to earth up the shoots until you reach about 5cm below the top of the bag. Keep the compost moist but not too wet at this stage as you may cause the potatoes to rot.

Add potato fertiliser or Growmore to the compost every time you earth up the potatoes to give them a good regular slow release feed throughout the season.

## **Harvesting**

First Earlies are best harvested in June or July in small quantities and eaten straight away.

Second Earlies can also be harvested in June or July and eaten straight away or the leaves can be cut off and the potatoes left in the soil until September, then dry and store in a hessian or paper bag in a cool, dark and frost free place.