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How to Grow Irish Potatoes In Lots Or City Yards to Get Best Results

Department of Agriculture Gives Method of Reducing Cost of Seed When Prices Are Soaring to Present Level.

Also Tells How Eggs May Be Kept From Spring Until Christmas Without Cold Storage Plant.

MANY persons, prompted by the high price of Irish potatoes, have written to the United States department of agriculture asking how to grow them successfully in their back yards or in vacant lots in their neighborhoods. Others who in the past have raised potatoes as a profitable way of utilizing idle land or as a crop which repays them, in whole or in part, for the cost and trouble of keeping down weeds and giving a more orderly appearance to their properties point out that good seed potatoes are scarce and high in price and ask whether there is not some method of reducing the cost for seed for their plots or half acres.

The cost of seeding, the garden specialists of the department point out, can be greatly reduced if instead of using a whole potato for planting the gardener will cut out from potatoes cone shaped pieces of flesh, each containing an eye of the potato. In this way only one-fourth to one-fifth of the flesh of the potato will be needed to provide seed, and the remainder of the potato can be cooked for table use. These cones range from one-fifth to one-seventh of an ounce in weight, whereas under the usual methods the sets range from three-fourths to two ounces in weight. A gardener under ordinary conditions will get best results by using fifteen to eighteen bushels, or 900 to 1,080 pounds of potatoes to the acre. This method of preparing sets, therefore, should make available for table use over 675 pounds of potato flesh which under ordinary conditions would be planted per acre.

Two Bushels For 50 by 100 Foot Plot.

To plant a plot 50 by 100 feet, or approximately one-ninth of an acre, at the same rate of seeding would call for one and two-thirds to two bushels of seed planted in the ordinary way. The method of using the cones and eyes and cooking the remainder of the flesh therefore becomes a worth while economy even when a small area is to be planted.

Under this plan it is not necessary to prepare the seed all at one time. From day to day the cones for seeding can be cut from the potatoes as they are being prepared for the table. The cuttings then should be spread out on a piece of paper in a moderately cool room (about 50 degrees Fahrenheit) and allowed to remain there until they have cured—that is, until the cut surface has become dry. A day or two should suffice for this, and potatoes then should be put in a shallow box or tray and placed where it is still cooler. Any storage condition that will insure them against frost on the one hand and undue shriveling on the other should prove satisfactory.

These seeds can be started indoors, provided it is possible to secure suitable soil and boxes. In such cases it may be desirable to plant the eye cuttings at once and allow them to start into growth indoors with the idea of transplanting them into the open ground when danger of frost is past and the ground is dry enough to be cultivated.

Small Sets Require More Care.

The smaller the size of the set or seed piece used the more thorough must be the preparation of the soil. The more finely the soil is pulverized and the more uniform the moisture conditions which can be preserved in the soil the better is the chance for the small seed piece to establish itself. A small set in rough, lumpy or dried out soil has little chance to live, let alone make a crop.

Generally speaking, the smaller the size of the set the closer it should be planted in the row if maximum yields are to be secured. Such sets may be expected to give the best yields if not spaced more than ten to twelve inches apart in the row.

How to Grow Potatoes.

Successful potato growing, the garden specialists advise their correspondents, hinges largely on the following factors:

Good land, well prepared.
Abundance of available plant food and moisture.
Selection of proper varieties.
Good seed and good tillage.
Thorough protection of the plants against insect and fungous pests.
The types of soil in which the potato plant thrives best are those designated as sandy or gravelly loam soils. It may be grown with a fair degree of success on any type of soil except loose sand and a heavy, sticky clay soil, provided the land is well drained and contains the necessary plant food.

Successful potato production is dependent to a large extent on the thoroughness with which the land is prepared before planting the crop. Where a horse can be used the land should be plowed from eight to ten inches deep, provided the surface soil is of a sufficient depth to permit it. It is never advisable to turn up more than one inch of raw subsoil at any one plowing, so if previous plowings have not been over 87 inches the maximum

depth at which it should be plowed is seven inches.

Where hand labor is employed the same rule should govern as to depth. In spading, especially on grass or waste land, turn the earth bottom side up.

Whether the land is plowed or spaded, it should be thoroughly pulverized immediately afterward. It is a bad practice to allow the freshly turned soil to bake in the sun and wind and thereby become cloddy, and at the same time lose a large percent of its moisture.

Where horse labor can be used, the land after plowing should be thoroughly disked first, then spring toothed, and finally finished with a smoothing harrow. Where land must be prepared by hand, it is good practice to pulverize the soil as much as possible when spading it up, after which it can be put in a fine condition of mellowness with a steel garden rake. The importance of thoroughly fluffing the soil cannot be overemphasized, for it increases the water holding capacity of the soil, renders more plant food available and reduces the number of weeds.

Varieties Adapted to Localities.

In the northeastern United States and along the south Atlantic seaboard the Irish Cobbler, Early Petoskey or Early Standard, all of which are practically identical, may be expected to produce larger crops and be more generally satisfactory for an early crop than the others mentioned. Quick Lunch and New Queen would be regarded as second choices for this section.

In the south central and southwestern states the Triumph may be expected to give results equal to or even better than the Irish Cobbler.

In the middle west the Early Ohio should do well, while the Early Harvest and Early Rose may be regarded as second choices.

Late Varieties.

In the New England states, Long Island and northern New York the Green Mountain, Gold Coin, Delaware and other late varieties of that class do best.

In northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota the late varieties named above do about as well as the Rural New Yorker No. 2 and are superior to it in table quality.

In western New York, southern Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa the Rural New Yorker No. 2, Sir Walter Raleigh and Carman No. 3 are the best adapted varieties and divide honors with the Green Mountain in the northern portions of these states.

Throughout Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia the variety known as McCormick is quite generally grown as a late variety. In a favorable season the Green Mountain can also be grown.

Depth to Plant.

Plant the small eye cuttings from one and one-half to three inches deep, depending upon the character of the soil—the lighter the soil the greater the depth of planting. Larger sets may be planted four inches deep.

If an early variety is planted and the work is to be done by hand the rows may be spaced as close as twenty-six inches, whereas if cultivation is to be done with a horse thirty to thirty-four inches usually is allowed.

Potato yields vary so greatly that only an approximate estimate can be given. If an early variety is grown it is not too much to expect twelve to fifteen bushels from a plot of ground 50 by 100 feet. Under favorable conditions this amount may be very considerably exceeded. In the case of a late variety larger yields may be expected.

Preserve Eggs by Water Glass.

March, April, May and June are the months when the hens of the country produce about 50 per cent of the lay of the whole year. These are the months also when the thrifty housewife who has her own hens or who can draw upon the surplus supply of a nearby neighbor puts away in water glass or lime water eggs for next autumn and winter. To insure success care must be exercised in this operation. The following directions are from the United States department of agriculture:

In the first place, the eggs must be fresh, preferably not more than two or three days old. Infertile eggs are best if they can be obtained, so after hatching exclude roosters from the flock and kill them for the table as needed.

The shells must be clean. Washing an egg with a soiled shell lessens its keeping quality. The protective gelatinous covering over the shell is removed by water, and when this is gone the egg spoils more rapidly.

The shells also must be free from the finest crack. One cracked egg will spoil a large number of sound eggs when packed in water glass.

Earthenware crocks are good containers. The crocks must be clean and sound. Scald them and let them cool completely before use. A crock holding six gallons will accommodate eighteen dozen of eggs and about twenty-two pints of solution. Too large crocks are

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Evansville Men on Trail.

Indianapolis, Ind., May 2.—(United Press)—May 1.—Twenty high democratic officials and colored voters of Evansville, Ind., went on trial in federal court here today on charges of election frauds, returned by the grand jury. Twenty-one Evansville democrats, all colored, have already pleaded guilty to "selling votes for \$2."

Among those who went on trial today were City Controller E. R. Osage, charged with having told Wm. Fellows, colored, that he would pay \$1 for all votes he could purchase; Chief of Police Edgar A. Schmitt, charged with paying a colored man \$2 for his vote and also telling a gambler on election day "we allow you to gamble so you should ask no compensation for your work at the polls;" Ed A. Joachim, chairman of democratic county

committee and Miles S. Saunders, city engineer.

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