

SWEET POTATOES YIELD WELL HERE

A. D. SMITH IS PIONEER IN
TUBER PRODUCTION

Only Few Varieties Mature, His
Experiments Show, But Crop
Proves Profitable.

By A. D. Smith

I have been growing sweet potatoes here for 7 years, and I have tried all the standard early and medium early varieties and many that are not standard. I have found only a few varieties that do well. The seasons seem to be too short for the late varieties. I have tried a few of them, but they did not amount to anything. It is possible that some of the late varieties might be grown in some localities by planting them extremely early and taking the risk of having to cover the plants if a cold spell came. This can be determined only by further experimenting. Of all the varieties I have tried the Early Triumph, Red Brazil, and the Nancy Hall are the most successful ones when the yield and market are taken into consideration. These yielded well for me, and the White Yam and General Grant also yields well. Yellow Strasburg is also a heavy yielder. These are the only varieties that I have tried that did yield well. These varieties have yielded a little more than 500 bushels per acre some years, and none of them have at any time gone below 300 bushels. In hardness they are about like the tomato.

Sweet potatoes are divided into two classes as regards their moisture content. The moist varieties are grown mainly in the South and the dry ones in the North, but there are exceptions. None of the varieties mentioned are classes with the driest but the Triumph is always classed as dry or semi-dry. The others are classed as moist, and the White Yam is the driest of the others mentioned. By experimenting other more worthy varieties may be found. I have tried some of the new creations that are better than any old varieties in some parts of the U. S., but they failed with me for some unknown reason. It is possible that a variety might fail in one locality and succeed in another. They succeeded with the Red Bermuda some places in Washington, but I tried it twice before they tried it, and it was a complete failure with me.

Diseases bother the sweet potato about as much as they do the Irish potato. The Triumph, Red Brazil, Yellow Strasburg, and Red Bermuda all belong to the Spanish group of sweet potatoes, and this group is far more resistant to diseases than any other with which I am acquainted. I have grown the Triumph here 7 years and no disease has bothered it, and I have grown the others of the Spanish group here without any disease, but I have not grown any of the others as long as the Triumph. This is one great point in favor of this group, because disease will come in time. The last few years disease has damaged the Hall variety to such an extent that I am not recommending it any more, although it is the main potato grown in the south to ship north. So far as the market is concerned the Triumph seems to be the best variety that I have found for the northwest. It is light yellow both inside and out, but it has not as good a shape as some varieties. The Yellow Strasburg and Red Bermuda are of rather poor quality. On account of cool nights late in the season, no variety of sweet potato gets as sweet here as in the south where the nights are warmer.

Generally speaking the sweet potato likes a sandy soil, but some varieties do well on a heavy soil. The Hall does well on a heavy soil and it seems to be at home on a sandy soil, except possibly where the soil is extremely loose and sandy. All varieties tend to grow too long and stringy on a soil that has a loose sub soil. This can sometimes be remedied by using a garden cultivator or a spring tooth harrow instead of a turning plow, if there is not too much trash on the ground. If there is too much trash for this, plow shallow with a turning plow.

I plant rows 3 1-2 feet apart with plants 1 1-2 to 1 1-2 feet apart in rows. If your ground is inclined to be wet, plant on ridges; but it is necessary to plant on the level if your ground does not hold the moisture well. Soils differ so much that it is impossible to say how often they should be irrigated. Those who have had experience in irrigating garden plants can usually determine from the looks of the plants when they need water.

The sweet potato can be dried or canned like fruit, and for this reason it can be grown where it does not mature. They can be eaten fresh

same as Irish potatoes before they are mature. For these reasons it might pay some to grow them in sections where they do not mature. Generally speaking they do not keep well in the natural state unless pretty well matured. The Triumph keeps better than other varieties.

If plants are shipped before planting, the roots should be soaked in water until the stems and leaves are stiff enough to stand up well. This indicates they are full of water. I use a transplanter, but if you have none, use a bricklayer' trowel or other suitable instrument to make holes in the ground and pour in enough water to wet the ground, if it is not already wet. Some might prefer to plant them in dry ground and irrigate them. I made one test with this method, but if the one test is any criterion, this method should not be followed. I planted two rows without any water in the transplanter and between these two rows I planted one row with water in transplanter as usual. I ran a stream of water along side of the two rows at once. At digging time the two rows combined yielded very little more than the one row that was watered with the transplanter. The method should not be condemned without further trial. Something else might have a big influence in the matter.

The yield in the northwest is so much heavier than in the regular sweet potato sections that the method of digging them there cannot be followed here. The average yield for the United States is less than 100 bushels per acre. I tried two Irish potato diggers but they damaged entirely too many potatoes. I had a digger made after my own plans. It succeeded better than the others but it damaged so many potatoes that I had to discard it. Some varieties of potatoes are easier to dig than others. The Red Brazil grows in a compact hill and is easier to dig than most other varieties. I did not grow any of this variety until after I had tried the diggers, and it might be handled with machinery on account of its compact growth. The best method that I have found is to use a mattock and dig parallel with the row. This requires far less work than digging across the row.

My experience indicates that it is necessary to bring seed potatoes from

the south and east occasionally. I have been following the hill selection method, but it seems that I have not been able to prevent deterioration to some extent.

The sweet potato is not a leguminous plant, but it has some method of getting more nitrogen than other non-leguminous plants. I do not think it gets it from the air. If you use chemical fertilizer, do not use a form of nitrogen that is available all season. Nitrogen late in the season gives too much plant growth at the expense of the potatoes. Probably it would be best to apply nitrate of soda after the plants are set. If too much is not applied it will be gone before the end of the season. In using sulphate of ammonia on Irish potatoes in an experimental way, I got more results from it on the second year application than on the first. This however was because I put it on in generous quantities. I think this indicates that this form of nitrogen, if used on sweet potatoes, should be applied in such quantity that it will be exhausted before fall. If your ground contains as much potash and phosphoric acid as the plants can use, there is not much danger of injuring the crop with nitrogen.

A large part of the people of the Northwest like the Jersey potato from California better than any other. I have tried every year to grow this variety, but I have always failed. I started a strain of my own of the Jersey potato, thought I might succeed by gradually getting them acclimated, but when I got them to the point where they yielded at the rate of 250 bushels per acre, disease destroyed them all, and I have none left to make a new start again. One year I went to an expense of \$110 to get plants and seed potatoes of this variety from all over the U. S. I thought I might find some satisfactory strain by trying a large number of strains, but all failed completely. The Jersey from California sells so low here in the fall that I do not think it is advisable to grow any variety on a large scale to compete in a distant market with these potatoes. I think they should be grown only for local markets and home use.

Do not waste the vines. They have a higher feeding value than alfalfa hay. The protein content is not quite as high as in alfalfa,

but the fat content is higher. On account of being coarser they are harder to cure than hay. I have fed them after they had frozen, and the horses did not show that they had any bad effect, but I think it is best to feed them before they are badly frozen.

HERMISTON HAS CHURCHES TO SERVE IN RELIGION

Settlers coming to the Umatilla project can find within its bounds church affiliations with almost and denomination. Almost before the first families were well settled, a Baptist missionary car, oddly enough in the charge of a Rev. Mr. Her-

miston and his wife, was run onto a siding by the town and a meeting held for some time. The Baptist church was one of the first public buildings to be constructed. The Catholic and Methodist churches now have fine buildings also, and the Episcopalians, Christian Science Society and Free Methodists have regular meeting places. Recently the Christian church has united with the Baptist organization.

The Ladies' Aid societies of the Methodist and Baptist churches and the Altar society of the Catholic church are active in their work and have good memberships.

Saturated With Ego
It was not the fee that caused

Sandy to look so sorrowful, as he staggered from the palmist's tent "Mon, Sandy, whit's wrang wi' ye?" exclaimed a friend. "Ye're lookino' awfu' glum."

Sandy pointed to the tent he had just left and answered. "That wumman in there told me my wife's second husband was tae be very handsome and clever."

"But," said his friend, "ye're no needin' tae worry aboot that. It'll be all the same when ye're dead and awa'."

"It's no that," replied Sandy. "Whit's makin' me sad is tae ken Jean wis mairrit afore an' never teit me!"

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