



A Gardeners Guide To Growing Potatoes In Manitoba

Manitoba's short growing season and cooler climate can make growing potatoes a challenge. However, with the right varieties and techniques, it's still possible to have a successful harvest. Here's a guide on how to grow potatoes in Manitoba's Zone 3 climate.

Selecting the Right Varieties

Manitoba's short growing season means that it's important to select potato varieties that can mature quickly. Some of the best varieties for Manitoba include Norland, Viking, Superior, and Yukon Gold. These varieties can be planted in late May to early June, once the last spring frost has passed. It's also worth considering the disease resistance of each variety, as some are more resistant to common potato diseases than others. For example, Yukon Gold is resistant to scab, verticillium wilt, and fusarium wilt.

Preparing the Soil

Before planting potatoes, it's important to prepare the soil properly. Potatoes prefer slightly acidic soil with a pH of 5.5-6.5. While Manitoba's soil is generally alkaline with a pH level above 7, there are some areas in Manitoba that have naturally acidic soil or have soil that has been acidified through natural processes or human intervention. The acidic soils in Manitoba are found in areas with high



rainfall or areas that were previously covered by forests, such as the Interlake region, the Whiteshell Provincial Park area, and parts of the eastern and western regions of the province. To prepare the soil, remove any weeds or debris, add compost or well-rotted manure, and till the soil to a depth of 20-30 cm.

Planting Techniques

Plant seed potatoes or tubers approximately 7-10 cm deep and 30 cm apart in prepared trenches spaced 60 cm apart. One method is pre-sprouting, which involves placing seed potatoes in a warm, bright location a few weeks before planting to encourage them to sprout. Another technique is plastic mulching, which involves laying black plastic over the soil to trap heat and promote early growth.

Hilling Techniques

Hilling is a common technique used by Manitoba gardeners to promote potato growth. This involves mounding soil around the base of the potato plants as they grow, which helps to protect the tubers and promote their growth. Begin hilling once the plants are 15-20 cm tall and continue to hill up the soil every 2-3 weeks until the plants reach maturity.

Watering and Fertilization

Potatoes require frequent watering to thrive, especially during hot, dry spells. Water the plants deeply once a week, making sure not to overwater. Fertilize the plants with a balanced fertilizer once a month, beginning when the plants are 10-15 cm tall.



Pest and Disease Control

Potato beetles and wireworms are common pests in Manitoba that can damage potato plants. To control these pests, handpick the beetles and apply a pesticide to the plants as needed. To control wireworms, rotate crops and avoid planting potatoes in recently converted garden beds. Late blight and early blight are common diseases in Manitoba that can damage potato plants. To prevent these diseases, choose disease-resistant potato varieties, avoid overhead watering.

Growing potatoes in Manitoba's Zone 3 climate requires selecting quick-maturing and disease-resistant potato varieties, preparing the soil with compost or well-rotted manure, using hilling techniques to promote growth, and controlling pests and diseases through regular maintenance and pesticide application. It's also important to water and fertilize the plants appropriately and to harvest and store the potatoes properly.

Potato Variety	Maturation Time	Size	Ideal Cooking Use	Disease Resistance
Norland	70-80 days	Small to medium	Boiling, roasting, frying	Moderate resistance to common scab
Viking	70-80 days	Medium to large	Baking, mashing, frying	Resistant to common scab
Superior	70-80 days	Medium to large	Baking, mashing, frying	Resistant to common scab
Yukon Gold	80-90 days	Medium	Baking, mashing, frying	Resistant to scab, verticillium wilt, and fusarium wilt
Russett	90-120 days	Medium to large	Baked, mashing, French fries, potatoe chips, soup	Moderate resistance to late blight and potato virus Y