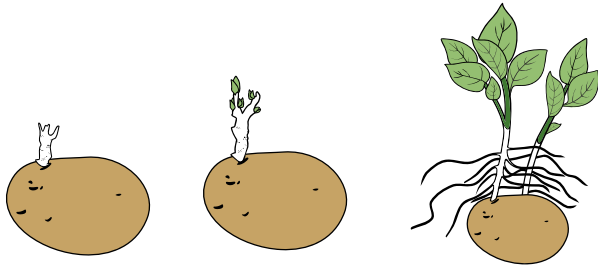


Growing Potatoes



Grow potatoes in bags on your patio

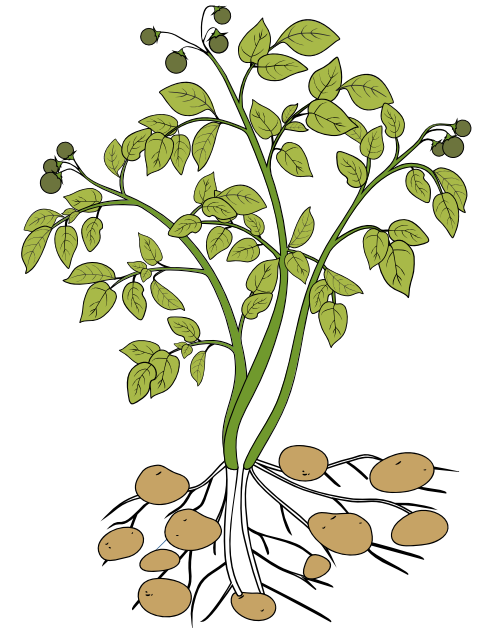
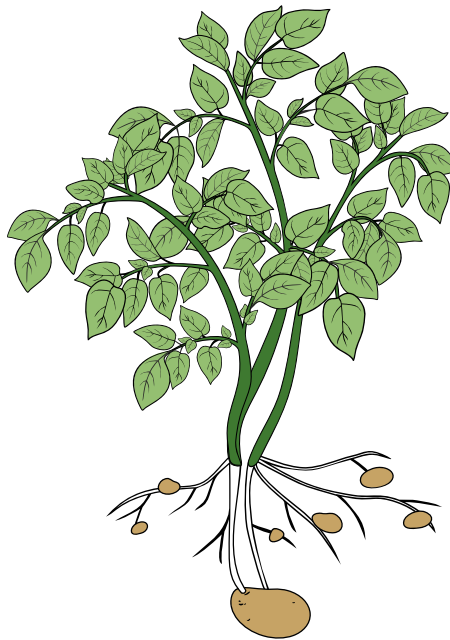
Start your potatoes off in an egg box in a warm place to help them sprout and 'chit' when the shoots get 2-3 inches long they are ready to plant at the end of Feb - Early March.

Plant 2-3 tubers in about 6 inches of good quality compost (such as John Innes no 2) and then another 3 inches on the top of the tubers. Water them well.

Avoid mushroom compost with potatoes as the lime it contains can cause scab.

Put your patio bags somewhere sunny and frost free. Within 3 weeks, they will begin to shoot.

Keep the compost just damp. When the potato shoots are about 15cm, cover them with more soil/compost mix. Carry on adding compost and earthing them up, bit by bit each week, until you reach the top of the bag. Once the shoots start producing flowers in May/- June you can start to harvest your potatoes (about 100 days after you planted them).



Harvesting

If you have several people to feed at once, you can turn out a whole bag at a time. It's easiest to do this into a wheelbarrow. All potatoes, but particularly first earlies and second earlies are best eaten fresh. Sugars in the tubers convert to starch when stored, meaning the flavour gradually disappears.

For this reason, patio grow bags are perfect for the 'potato milking technique': open up the velcro flap and put your hand in. Harvest and eat only what you need for that meal. You can then water the plant from above and if you have not disrupted the root system too much, it should continue to grow.