



# **VEGGIE EDUCATION: POTATOES!**

Learn how to store, prepare and grow your  
own potatoes at home this summer!

For Malletts Bay Elementary School  
by students at the University of Vermont



# Storing Potatoes

Did you know that potatoes can last for up to 6 months when stored properly?



Potatoes often come in large bags and but you may only use one or two at a time. The others are left to go bad. They mold, they rot, they turn color and they become inedible and downright yucky. It's wasteful and, if you're like most people these days, you don't have money to waste.

## **DON'T Store**

- Your potatoes in the fridge, its too cold for them. The cold air makes them shrivel up faster.
- Them with onions! When put together, they create yucky gases and will cause **BOTH** of these tasty foods to go bad more quickly.

## **DO Store Them**

- In a cardboard box
- A paper bag
- In an unheated basement
- An insulated garage or shed (winter)

Make sure your container is **NOT** plastic so your potatoes can breathe!





# Grow your own in a plastic bag!

## **Step 1: Prepare your potatoes**

Small potatoes can be planted whole, but larger ones are usually cut into small pieces, each about the size of a large egg and with one or two “eyes” or stem buds. Some people let potato pieces sprout before planting, but this is not necessary.

## **Step 2: Prepare your bag**

Punch small water drainage holes near the bottom of a grow-bag, medium size black garbage bag, mesh burlap sack, or any other kind of bag (even a potting soil bag) that will hold at least two or three gallons of potting soil. Fill the bottom of the bag with a few inches of soil, and stir in a small amount - a scant handful - of all-purpose or organic fertilizer.

## **Step 3: Plant the Seed Pieces**

Potato plants can grow fairly large, so don't crowd them. Plant two, three, or four potato seed pieces in the soil, cover with a couple inches of soil, and water them well. Place the bag where it can get plenty of sunshine and remain cool - not a hot area like on a concrete patio or against a hot wall. Continue to water as needed to keep the deep plant roots moist, not wet.

## **Step 4: Cover Plants as They Grow**

As the plants begin to grow, gently sift three or more inches of fresh potting soil or a thick mulch of hay or bark around the plants, enough to cover the lower stems and leaves. Continue this weekly until the bag is nearly filled with soil or mulch. Continue to water enough to wet the roots down deep without keeping the plants wet.

## **Step 5: Harvest**

After three or four months, the plants should start to turn yellow and even flower. Small potatoes can be harvested by gently probing the soil with your fingers, but for larger tubers leave the entire plants to mature before dumping the bags out to see what has grown. Store larger ones in a cool, dry, shaded area indoors until ready to use.



# Homemade Freezer Fries

## Ingredients:

- 2 lbs russet potatoes
- water
- several trays of ice cubes
- avocado oil or other oil for baking
- salt
- seasoning of choice
- Parchment paper (for freezing)

*Whether you grow your own potatoes, or purchase in bulk from the farmer's market, a day of prep can fill your freezer full of potato french fries ready to bake, quick and easy!*

***Be sure to ask your parents for help.***

## Prepare for Freezing:

- Scrub your potatoes, peel, rinse well, and pat dry with a kitchen towel.
- Fill a large bowl with cold water.
- Cut the potatoes into 1/2-inch French fry shapes.
- Place the cut potatoes in the bowl of cold water as you work.
- Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat.
- While the pot is heating up, fill a large bowl with cold water and ice.
- Working in batches, blanch your fries by dropping them into the boiling water.
- Boil each batch for 5-minutes.
- Remove the blanched fries and drop them into the ice water.
- Let cool for at least 15-minutes.
- Remove and dry well with a clean kitchen towel.
- Toss with olive oil, avocado oil and seasoning of choice.
- Lay out on a parchment lined sheet pan and freeze overnight.
- Store frozen fries in a zipper bag for up to 3 months.
- 2 pounds of potatoes fits into a quart sized bag.

## To Bake Frozen French Fries:

- Preheat your oven to 450°F.
- Spray a sheet pan with avocado oil.
- Spread out the frozen French fries on sheet pan, spray with more avocado oil, and bake in a preheated oven until brown and crispy, about 12-15 minutes.
- Turn about half way through.





The Potato  
Is  
Delicious  
&  
Nutritious

ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU GROW IT  
YOURSELF!

