



Sweet Potato

Growing and Harvest Information

Sweet potatoes need 4 months of warm weather and moist conditions. Plant slips in well-drained, fertile soil after the last spring frost, when the soil starts to warm. Before planting, till area to a depth of 8-10 inches. Plant slips in mounds 6-8 inches high, 12 inches wide and deep enough to cover the roots and 1/2 inch of the stem. Plant slips 12-18 inches apart. Water with starter solution high in phosphorous and continue to water generously for the next few days.

Sweet potatoes are ready to harvest 3-4 months after planting, up until the first fall frost. The ends of potato vines and leaves begin to yellow when ready for harvest. Harvest greens along with the roots, as they are also edible.

Introduction

Sweet potatoes are known for their bright orange color and sweet flavor. They are highly nutritious, low in calories and often produce a generous harvest. Unlike most vegetables, sweet potatoes are started with slips cut from the potato, rather than seeds. Both the roots and the shoots (the leaves) are edible.

Preservation

Storing:

- Cure sweet potatoes after harvesting to preserve the high sugar concentrations and, thus, the sweet flavor. Curing also allows the skin of the potato to form over any scratches or bruises.
- To cure, keep them in a warm place with high humidity (about 80 degrees F and 90% humidity) for 1-2 weeks. During this time, ensure the potatoes are not touching. Next, store between 55-60 degrees F with 90% humidity. After curing, the potatoes will keep for about 6 months.
- If the vines of sweet potatoes become frosted before harvesting, harvest immediately because frost can negatively impact storage life and taste.

Freezing:

- Wash sweet potatoes, and then boil for 10-15 minutes, until they are tender, but still firm.
- Let them sit at room temperature, until they are cool enough to slice or peel. Put diced potatoes into airtight freezer bags and squeeze out as much air as possible before sealing. Sweet potatoes will keep this way for up to a year.

Nutritional Benefits

Source	Rating
Vitamins	EXCELLENT
Mineral	GOOD
Fiber	GOOD

Use By Guide

Vegetable State	Use by
Cured	6 months
Frozen	1 year
Raw	1-2 weeks



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Fun Fact:

Although mistaken for "yams", sweet potatoes are not yams! Yams vary greatly in size and grow only in the tropics. Sweet potatoes are in the morning glory family and yams are related to lilies.

Prepare Sweet Potatoes Like This:

Bake sweet potatoes in the microwave on high-power for 4-6 minutes to save time! If it still feels firm, let it stand 5 minutes to soften.

Don't substitute sweet potatoes for regular potatoes in recipes. Sweet potatoes are a good substitute for pumpkin, though!

Preparation

Recipe 1: Sautéed Sweet Potato Greens

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tbsp brown sugar
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large bunch sweet potato greens (about 1/2 pound)
- 1/2 small white onion, diced

Directions

- Remove the sweet potato leaves from stems and set aside.
- Remove smaller stems from the larger, tougher stems. Discard the tough stems and chop the smaller stems.
- In medium-sized pan, heat oil over medium high-heat. Add onion & sauté until softened, about 3 minutes.
- Add chopped stems and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes.
- Add leaves, salt, pepper, and maple syrup and sauté until leaves are wilted, about 2 minutes.

Recipe 2: Baked Sweet Potatoes with Apples

Ingredients

- 3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and boiled
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 large apples
- 3 tbsp butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Core, peel, and slice the apples, and fry them in butter until light brown. Slice the sweet potatoes.
2. Arrange the apples and potatoes in alternate layers in a buttered baking dish and sprinkle with salt.
3. Sprinkle with the brown sugar and dot with more butter. Bake in the oven for about 35 minutes.