

Growing Sweet Potatoes

KCCG sells Beauregard sweet potato slips. These slips take 90-100 days to grow and boast high yields of 6-8 sweet potatoes per plant. These sweet potatoes have light tan-purple skin and dark orange flesh.



When to plant

Plant sweet potatoes in mid-May to mid-June, when night temperatures are consistently above 60 degrees. If you plant later than mid-June, your sweet potatoes will not have enough time to get big.

How to plant

KCCG sweet potato slips are planted in small pots with 12 plants per pot. This helps the slips to continue growing and keeps the roots moist. **If you are not going to plant your slips right away, keep them in the pot in a sunny location and make sure to water daily to keep the soil moist.**

Preparing the ground:

- Loosen the soil where your sweet potatoes will grow with a tiller, garden fork or hoe. Raised beds are ideal for planting sweet potatoes.
- Dig holes 8" deep. The holes do not need to be very wide.
- Space your holes 12-18" apart. Sweet potatoes will be smaller if you plant them closer. If you want lots of smaller sweet potatoes, plant 12" apart, if you want less sweet potatoes that are larger in size, give them more room.

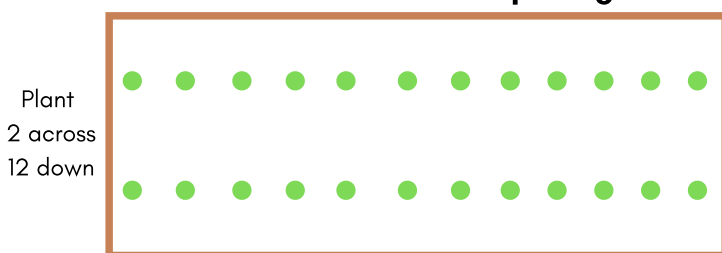
Planting your slips:

- Carefully tip the slips out of the pot and shake off the extra potting soil.
- Gently pull apart the slips.
- Set one slip into each hole. Make sure all the roots are covered with soil. Plant all the way up to the first leaves.
- Fill the hole in with loose soil around the slip.
- Water your plants right away. Make sure to water deeply.

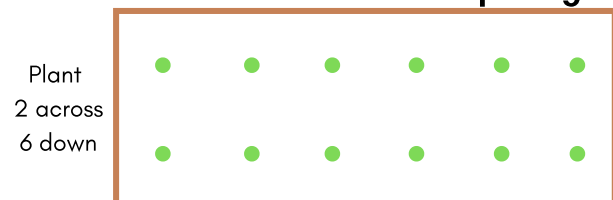
Scan with phone camera to view our sweet potato planting video.



K-12 Sweet Potato Spacing



PreK Sweet Potato Spacing



Care

Sweet potatoes are a relatively easy crop to grow, and do not require much maintenance. Follow these steps to yield the best crop:

- Mulch your sweet potatoes with straw to keep the soil cool, retain soil moisture, and prevent weeds.
- You do not need to clip off the vines as they grow. If they grow out of the designated area, just pick them up and redirect them back into your sweet potato area.
- Sweet potato vines are a favorite snack for deer and rabbits. If you live in an area with a large deer population, you may need to cover the area with row cover or a cage until vines are large.

Harvesting

Harvest sweet potatoes when the ground is dry. Stop watering for 1-2 weeks before you harvest to prepare for a warm, dry harvest. Optimal harvesting time is usually between mid-September to early October, before the first frost.

To harvest:

- Remove vines from your sweet potato bed by pulling or cutting near the plants roots.
- Next, using a garden fork, dig about 12" out from the center of the plant. Pry up the ground around your sweet potato plants and then use your hands to pull out the sweet potatoes.
- You can lightly brush the dirt off of the sweet potato. Even if the sweet potato is muddy, do not wash it off as this will cause sweet potatoes to spoil quickly.

Storage

Set aside any sweet potatoes that were punctured or snapped in half during harvesting. These should be used first as they will not store well. Put all undamaged sweet potatoes into a basket or box with ventilation and bring indoors for drying and storage. Store at room temperatures (60-75 degrees).

Sweet potatoes will keep the longest with minimal disturbance - try not to move them around too much in their storage container.

SWEET POTATO

HUMMUS

Recipe for:

Serves 10-20 students a sample size portion

INGREDIENTS

- 1-2 medium sized sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1, 15 oz. can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 clove of garlic
- 2 teaspoons of cumin
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- salt to taste
- veggies or crackers for dipping

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 450° Fahrenheit.
2. Spread peeled and cubed sweet potatoes on a baking sheet in an even layer and drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Season with salt.
3. Bake sweet potatoes for about 25-30 minutes or until they are tender and can be pierced easily with a fork.
4. In a food processor, combine chickpeas, sweet potatoes, remaining olive oil, garlic clove, cumin and salt. Pulse until smooth, scrapping down the sides as needed.
5. Once hummus is fully blended and blended to desired consistency, serve with veggies or crackers and enjoy!



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