

# You Say Potato I Say Potatoes!!

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by Annie Plowman

Have you ever grown potatoes? Have you ever had home grown potatoes? How about potatoes grown in a trash can? Do I sound like Dr. Seuss? I can't even begin to tell you how excited I am to try this one. I've talked to a lot of people who have had great success and this is going to be a really fun project for you and your tater tot.

Potatoes are grown from seed potatoes. You want to use certified seed potatoes bought at a nursery. Don't use grocery potatoes because the treatment they receive will not allow them to produce. I am using 'Yukon Gold' but there are many fun potatoes out there to try. Perhaps you will be bold and try 'Viking Purple'!

For the trash can method, you will need: a 30" tall (clean) plastic trash can with holes drilled in the bottom, 2 pieces of 2x4, potting soil (acidic preferred), organic vegetable fertilizer with alfalfa meal. I am going with a black trash can so that it absorbs heat. I am also going to use a can that has a lid so I can cover it on the freezing nights. Just remember to uncover the can in the morning. A few optional items that I am choosing to use are sulfur dust (fungicide) and straw. I will dust my seeds with a little sulfur to prevent fungus. The straw will help keep the plants from freezing. Use any extra straw to protect those frost tender plants in the garden.

Oh... and hey! Wash that trash can with a diluted bleach and water solution if you aren't using a new one. Rinse it well. Sheesh... You knew that, right?

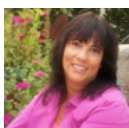
\*Straw can be purchased at many feed stores (phone directory) throughout the county for less than \$10 per bale. (it should be closer to \$5 or \$6) Don't ask for hay. Hay is for horses and is pricey.

Place the trash can on the boards in a sunny spot. Use anything you wish as long as it is elevated so it can drain. Layer about 2" of straw inside the bottom of the can. Follow with 6-8" of acidic soil mixed with vegetable fertilizer. Place seeds (cut side down) and cover with only a few inches of soil and some straw. Lightly water. As the plants emerge and reach about 6" high, cover them with a combination of soil and straw (the straw is insulation) so that only 1/3 of the plant is sticking out. Continue this process until the plants flower. Then it's time to stop watering and let them dry.

The plant will produce a cluster of potatoes below the surface. The potatoes are ready when they reach a size you find desirable for your table.

I am providing some links down at the bottom of the blog for more detailed information about how to grow potatoes. It's easy but there is a lot of info I thought you'd like to have. A few notes, potatoes are not supposed to be exposed to the sun. That can make them green and the green spots are toxic; as is the plant and roots. Don't fret ... just know what you are eating.

Happy Planting!



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