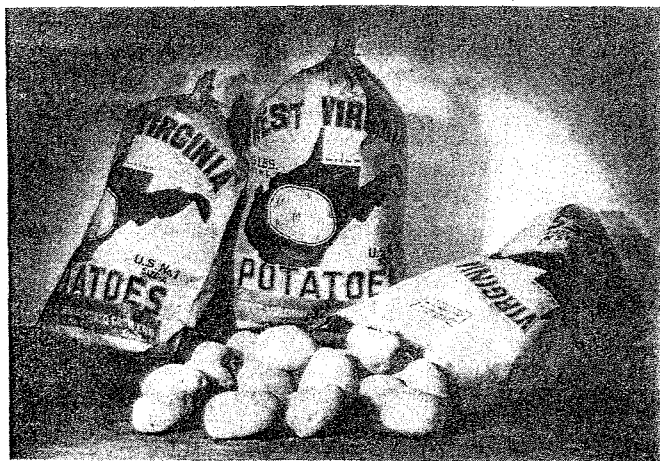


Design for Everyday Living



GROWING POTATOES



MANY farmers and home gardeners can greatly increase their potato yields by following recommended cultural practices and insect and disease control methods. Some of the more important practices are outlined in this leaflet, and, if followed, will help you produce a bigger and better crop of potatoes.

VARIETY

Irish Cobbler is still the best early potato in spite of its deep eyes. Kennebec, a heavy-yielding variety that is resistant to late blight, looks promising as a mid-season or late variety. Katahdin and Sebago are also popular for the mid-season or late crops.

SOIL

Potatoes do best on a loose, deep, well-drained soil. Heavy, compact clay soils are undesirable. The soil should be slightly acid. A pH reading of 5.5 is about right. The soil should be plowed deeply, preferably 8 to 10 inches. If shallow plowing has been practiced in the past, however, do not plow to this depth the first year. It would be better to turn up about 1/2 inch of new soil each year until a depth of 8 to 10 inches is reached.

ROTATION

Do not grow potatoes year after year on the same soil because of the build-up of diseases. A good three-year rotation would be (1) potatoes, (2) wheat, and (3) clover. A good four-year rotation would be (1) potatoes with rye as a cover crop, (2) corn, (3) wheat, and (4) clover.

MANURE

Like any vegetable crop, manure is important for potato production. The manure should not be applied the same year that the potatoes are grown, however, because it often increases scab. It would be

best to apply the manure the year before on the clover sod.

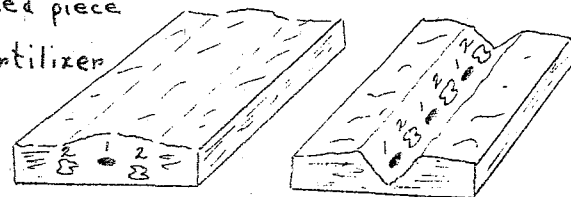
FERTILIZER

Because potatoes require a lot of plant food, it is important to use liberal amounts of commercial fertilizer. About 1400 pounds of a 5-10-10 fertilizer should be used per acre. If the equipment for doing the job is available, the fertilizer should be placed in bands about 3 inches to each side and a little below the seed piece.

If equipment for applying fertilizer in bands is not available, 700 pounds per acre should be broadcast before plowing and an additional 700 pounds per acre applied in the following way:

1 Seed piece

2 Fertilizer



Fertilizer applied
in bands

Fertilizer dropped
by hand between seed

Drop the seed pieces about 10 inches apart. Between each seed piece drop a small handful of fertilizer. Do not mix this fertilizer with the soil, but cover it along with the seed. Regardless of how the fertilizer is applied, it should never come in contact with the seed.

SEED

The best way to be sure that you are planting disease-free seed is always to purchase certified seed. Using disease-free seed is one of the cheapest and easiest ways of increasing yields. Cut the seed just before it is to be planted. The pieces should be blocky, and weigh about 1 to 1 1/2 ounces. The use of dryers, such as lime or sulphur, on newly cut seed is of no value.

SEED POTATO HANDLING

Before cutting or planting, seed potatoes should be warmed to room temperature (about 70°F). Ideally, seed potatoes should just be starting to sprout when they are planted. Also, they will "heal over" and continue to grow better if planted immediately after cutting. This is especially true if the soil is warm and moist.

If cut potatoes must be stored before planting, place them in slatted crates and stack the crates so that 50° to 60° air can circulate freely around the crates. Be sure to bring these cut potatoes up to 70° to 75° temperatures again before planting.