



Tidbits for Sweet Potato Production

- Choose well-drained sandy loam soil with pH of 5.5 to 6.7. If pH falls below 5.3, add lime according to soil test results. This is usually done in the fall of the year.
 - Avoid poorly drained heavy clay soils and low-lying areas that hold water. i.e., buckshot.
 - Always have a soil test and follow recommendations exactly before planting.
 - Use seed potatoes that are registered, foundation or virus tested (GI), and weevil free.
 - Always plant slips on raised beds 12 to 14 inches within rows 4 to 6 inches deep and 36 to 42 inches between rows.
 - Always water transplanted slips with super phosphate or water-soluble fertilizer such as 20-20-20 = (N-P-K) at the time of planting.
 - Use recommended pesticides only. Apply at the correct time and proper dosage.
 - Use proven integrated pest management techniques such as parasitic nematodes, parasitic wasp *Bacillus Thuriensis*, other natural insect enemies and resistant varieties.
 - Always use low nitrogen complete fertilizers such as 8-24-24, 6-24-24, or 0-24-24 after receiving soil analysis. When in doubt 200 to 300 pounds per acre of a low nitrogen fertilizer is preferred. Fertilizer should be applied approximately one month before planting and/or in split applications.
 - Avoid high nitrogen fertilizers that tend to produce excessive vine growth at the expense of storage root production.
- as this may account for 60 to 70 percent of the your yield.
- Grow only the recommended cultivars..
 - Set out transplants when soil temperature in the top 4 inches of soils is at least 65 degrees Fahrenheit. This is usually done during late April or early May until June 30. The southern part of the state usually plants earlier than the central or northern regions.
 - Avoid exposing storage roots to temperatures below 55 degrees to prevent cold damage. i.e., hard core. Keep storage roots at 60 degrees Fahrenheit after curing 3 to 5 days at 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit and 95 percent relative humidity. Adequate ventilation should be available.
 - Avoid new land that was in pasture or that has fresh manure to permit Scurf disease and wire worm insect problems.
 - If available, apply irrigation water at the rate of 1 ½ to 2 inches per acre per week. This may vary based on soil type, air temperature, rainfall amounts, and field drainage conditions.
 - Harvest sweet potatoes after they have grown for at least 95 days. Always handle carefully to avoid bruised, cut, and skinned storage roots.
 - When bedding storage roots always soak in Mertect 340 and spray with Botran or Cloratan to prevent the spread of the scurf organism.
- For more information, please contact Dr. Franklin Chukwuma, coordinator of Off-Campus Centers, 601-877-2312 or franklin@alcorn.edu*
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- As vines spread profusely, re-hip raised beds and side dress as described in soil test, i.e., 30 to 50 pounds per acre of potassium fertilizers (0-0-60) to promote storage roots produced from side shoots