

SO YOU WANT TO RAISE A GARDEN in South Deschutes County!

By; Dale Key, Little Deschutes Grange, La Pine, OR

I'm no expert and I didn't go to School to learn how to garden. I have picked up a little knowledge over my almost 60 years of gardening and I will share some of that with friends of The Little Deschutes Grange.

When I was very young and in grade school, my grandfather, Cash let me help with planting his garden, by the time I was in High School I was raising a garden for my family. After I was married my father in-law, Ewald really gave me an education in growing a garden for fresh use and preserving for the winter. His gardens were a picture of perfection. He was a wonderful father in-law and I miss him greatly.

As you might assume, I learned from the School of Hard Knocks and some great family in my past. I going to try and share some of this with members of The Little Deschutes Grange and the community.

If you have ever picked fresh peas from the garden and eaten them right out of the shell or dug a fresh carrot from your garden and washed it off and taken a bite, you know how much different they are from those in the stores

In South Deschutes County our soil is poor, it takes, Humus, Fertilizer and lots water to make things grow. Never ever use fresh manure in your garden and be very careful with Chicken droppings as it is very high in Ammonia Nitrate and will burn your plant roots.

You are welcome to ask questions and I will do my best to answer them correctly, if you have questions when garden time comes just give me a phone call.

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PLANTING YOUR POTATO SEEDS in South Deschutes County

Note: Soil temps should be above 50 Degrees (F'). Frost protection after growth starts to show. A light freeze may slow production. See seed germination chart for ideal soil temps.

The usual method of planting potatoes is to dig a V-shaped trench or drill about (3") deep in your prepared seed bed. Alternatively if the soil is reasonably light it may save you time to make a hole with a hoe or some such tool and carefully drop the potato in.

Plant Early potatoes in late June in Southern Deschutes County - two weeks earlier in protected areas of Deschutes County and a couple of weeks later in colder areas. Plant main crop varieties in mid to late June.

For Early varieties the drills need to be (12") apart and for Main crop varieties (16") apart - they make more top and root growth. Along the drills, Early potatoes are spaced (12") apart and main crop (16") apart.

Carefully plant the seed potatoes with the rose-end uppermost - rejecting and destroying any diseased vegetables. After planting out the potatoes along the drill, cover each one with a handful of peat or fine soil to protect the shoots - they snap off easily - as you fill in the drill or hole. The seed potatoes should end up with a covering of approximately (3") of soil.

Don't despair. . . learning **to grow potatoes** will follow naturally from actual experience in the field. Besides, you're not alone. I'm here to serve as your guide to a delicious vegetable garden in South County.

Dale Key, Little Deschutes Grange Gardener

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Growing Potatoes in South Deschutes County

By: Dale W. Key, Little Deschutes Grange Member 2012

Let us start with ground preparation-

Our soil in South County is basically sand, pumice and small rocks; it has very little nourishment for growing a garden.

A person should if at all possible start your garden in the fall, clearing a spot that has full sun and that is away from tree roots that will sap your soil of nutrients and water. Work the soil as deep as the top soil layer goes or about 10 inches. Apply about 6 inches of well rotted (3year old) manure and work into the soil, rake the larger rocks and roots out of the garden bed and let lay over the winter. In the spring when the ground has thawed and the ground temp is above 40 degrees you should again work the soil and make it ready for planting. Set up your rows with the garden stakes about 20 inches apart. A good garden stake will be about 1"x 2" X 24". When your soil has reached 50 degrees or above, it's time to plant.

Dig your "V" or planting hole about 3 inches deep, place the potato seeds about 12 inches apart with the rounded end up. If you have set them out in advance to start sprouting or chitting (very old English word), the end with all the sprouts should go up, the next step is very important for our area. Cover the seeds with just enough soil to be even with the garden bed, about 3-4 inches. If you cover too deeply it will keep the soil too cold to grow early, when the new growth is about 5 to 6 inches in length hill the potatoes leaving the very top growth uncovered, do this at least one more time as the tops grow. The hills should now be about 6 to 8 inches high and about a foot wide. At both stages of hilling, I like to put on a little Ammonium Nitrate fertilizer; all purpose fertilizer is great for the rest of the garden but not for potatoes because it lowers the acidity of the soil towards neutral. You will need to water deep every two or three days once they have sprouted, potatoes grow from the bottom up and once the tubers (baby potatoes) begin to grow they need a steady supply of moisture for at least two full months.

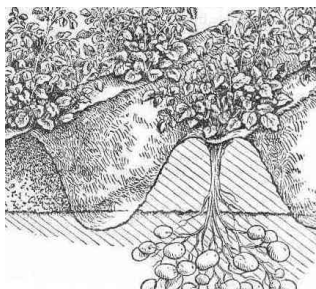
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Bug and disease problems are abundant in South County. Common potato scab is one of the worst problems. It doesn't hurt the eating or food value because you peel it away. You will have less common potato scab with the soil acid levels in the 5.5 range. Scab doesn't hurt the eating as it is only skin deep. I will suggest some varieties a little later that have resistance to scab (also see charts).

We also have the potato beetle that lays its eggs in the garden and they grow into a large grubs that feed on your potato tubers. There are potato fleas that live under the leaf and suck the nutrient from the plant as well as some blights (not a big problem here). As for the grubs you can purchase a product to help control these, most other bug problems can be taken care of with common garden sprays or home remedies. If you have the time, patience and understanding of green gardening then by all means use it.

Remember, new potatoes or tubers grow from the bottom up, this is why they need to be hilled (see picture).



You can dig some "new" potatoes once the plants are in full bloom (small white or purple flowers on top). Wait to harvest the remainder until the tops have died down in the fall. You may stop watering in early to mid September or when the vines get a heavy frost or freeze. Leave in the ground a couple of weeks for the skins to harden before harvesting.

Suggested varieties;

"Andover" is a good early, scab resistant variety. See chart for details

"Owyhee Russet" Exp. #AO96160-3, This is a newer potato that was released in 2009. **Owyhee Russet**, known as AO96160-3 prior to release, is a mid to late season russet variety with good appearance and processing

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quality. It produces reasonable yields with a high percentage of U.S. No. 1 tubers with relatively good size uniformity. It has high specific gravity, light fry color, few sugar ends, and few internal and external tuber defects. It is resistant to common scab and *Fusarium* dry rot. **Order early.**

Some of the other more common varieties that may do well are;

Yukon Gold, Chieftain (red) and **Lehigh**. I have attached two charts that will give you more information than you will probably use, they are a great reference source.

Gardening is hard work that takes almost daily care, it isn't cheap but worth it in the long run. The freshness and flavor are outstanding and you can't buy that at the store.

For those that just want to try growing a few potatoes, try this; Take a 5 to 7 gallon bucket, drill 3/8 or 1/2 inch holes evenly spaced in the bottom, put about 4 inches of potting soil in the bottom, place 2 or 3 seed potatoes well spaced on top of the potting soil, add another 3-4 inches of potting soil. When the seeds have sprouts about 6 inches long, add more soil up to the green leaves, continue this until the bucket is almost full, keep watered and fertilized, when the flowers have faded they may be harvested for fresh potatoes or wait until the vines have died down for a larger harvest. Black or dark colored buckets work best because they absorb heat better.

Good luck and have fun.

GARDENING IN SOUTH DESCHUTES COUNTY

By; Dale Key, Little Deschutes Grange, La Pine, OR 2012

Dear Members of Little Deschutes Grange and Community;

As a member of the grange and a long time gardener in the area, I would like to share some of what I have learned in the last 12 years.

Yes, you can grow a garden in South Deschutes County, at least some of the more important veggies. When I say more important I mean Root Vegetables like, Potatoes, Carrots, Garlic, Onions, Beets, Parsnips and Rutabaga's. You can also have good success with Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kale and Brussels sprouts if you are attentive and are willing to work for it.

I have some favorite types that I have found to do better than others in our area. The following list may help you get started with your own gardens based upon my experiences.

Asparagus: Buy male plants only for better production. A cold frame is suggested to keep early sprouts protected from frost.

Beets: Cylindra, This is a long beet about 1" to 1 1/2" X 4" long that are great for slicing (Burpee)

Beets: Bull's Blood, another great Heirloom Short season beet (Burpee)

Broccoli: Bonanza Hybrid, 50- 55 days to maturity-Medium heads (Burpee)

Cabbage: Early Jersey Wakefield is good but if you can find Danish Baldhead it's even better, these are both smaller family sized heads. For large heads try Flat Dutch for great Kraut.

Carrots: Tender Sweets; A long market type that is tasty sweet, slow to germinate, keep soil damp or cover with plastic until sprouts show.

Cauliflower: Plant any of the early types that mature in about 50 days.

Horseradish: Needs constant water and some fertilizer each month. This plant will come back each year if you only cut off the top 8 inches of the root in late fall. Spreads slightly so give it some room.

Garlic: Any.

Onion: I like Sweet types for green onions, they don't keep so pull and use when they get table size. Keepers should be planted in the fall (September) and covered with mulch to keep from freezing.

Cont.-

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Table Peas: Wando (Good) Perfection (Good) for freezing. Short season variety. Alaska Pea (Great for continuous picking for table use, comes on steady for long periods if kept watered.

Sugar Peas: Oregon Sugar Pod

Parsnips: Any

Lettuce and Radishes do well here, I plant lettuce where it gets shade from hot afternoon sun.

Potatoes: See “What you need to know about growing potatoes in South Deschutes County”

You may wish to try other varieties or types of vegetables and they may do well here also. What I have not had success with is; Beans, Corn, Cucumbers, Melons, Peppers and Squash. I know that some in La Pine have grown these with minor success and a lot of hard work. If you have a green house, anything is possible.

I don't waste my time on vegetables that won't produce a descent crop, I have grown tomatoes and picked one or two, I've grown peppers and picked one or two, the same for squash. It just isn't worth the time, effort or expense to me.

Go on line for seed catalogs and ordering information. Search for **Garden Seed Companies**

Have a great 2012 garden success.

How to Grow Potatoes - Chitting

Before planting your potatoes - 'chit' them - **see the photo below** this simple little tip on how to grow potatoes means you get an earlier crop harvested. It's a simple process of allowing shoots to grow from the 'rose' end where the most 'eyes' are situated... usually the widest end - the seed potatoes need to be about the size of a hens egg.



The eyes being the point where the shoots will emerge. This is how to grow potatoes to effectively add a few weeks to the growing season and is vital for Early potatoes and will benefit Main crop potatoes.

Set out the potato tubers in egg trays or, if you have a large number, into shallow boxes with about 1" (one Inch) of dry peat in the base - rose end pointing upwards.

Don't worry if you set them out wrong way up and the shoots look a bit distorted and weak - just rub off the shoots with your finger and place them back again the correct way up, and these vegetables will sprout again. Research has shown that the sprouts can be removed several times and the sprouts will grow back.

Carrying out this process means you will need to buy your seed potatoes early - 6 weeks before planting time. Place the boxes in a light (not sunny) but frost-free room.

The room should not be warm as your aim is to grow sturdy shoots about (1") long and not weak, spindly growth. Once your potatoes have chitted and are ready for planting

do not remove any of these sprouted shoots.

SEED GERMINATION & SOIL TEMPERATURE CHART

Provided by Dale Key, Little Deschutes Grange. Source unknown 2012

Percentage of Normal Vegetable Seedlings

Produced at Different Temperatures* **

Numbers in () are the days to seedling emergence. Number in red = optimal daytime soil temperature for maximum production in the shortest time.

Crops	32°F	41°F	50°F	59°F	68°F	77°F	86°F	95°F	104°F
Asparagus	0	0	61(53)	80(24)	88(15)	95(10)	79(12)	37(19)	0
Beans, lima	0	0	1	52(31)	82(18)	90(7)	88(7)	2	0
Beans, snap	0	0	1	97(16)	90(11)	97(8)	47(6)	39(6)	0
Beets	0	53(42)	72(17)	88(10)	90(6)	97(5)	89(5)	35(5)	0
Cabbage	0	27	78(15)	93(9)	0(6)	99(5)	0(4)	0	0
Carrots	0	48(51)	93(17)	95(10)	96(7)	96(6)	95(6)	74(9)	0
Cauliflower	0	0	58(20)	60(10)	0(6)	63(5)	45(5)	0	0
Celery	0	72(41)	70(16)	40(12)	97(7)	65	0	0	0
Cucumber	0	0	0	95(13)	99(6)	99(4)	99(3)	99(3)	49
Eggplant	0	0	0	0	21(13)	53(8)	60(5)	0	0
Lettuce	98(49)	98(15)	98(7)	99(4)	99(3)	99(2)	12(3)	0	0
Muskmelon	0	0	0	0	38(8)	94(4)	90(3)	0	0
Okra	0	0	0	74(27)	89(17)	92(13)	88(7)	85(6)	35(7)
Onions	90(136)	98(31)	98(13)	98(7)	99(5)	97(4)	91(4)	73(13)	2
Parsley	0	0	63(29)	0(17)	69(14)	64(13)	50(12)	0	0
Parsnips	82(172)	87(57)	79(27)	85(19)	89(14)	77(15)	51(32)	1	0
Peas	0	89(36)	94(14)	93(9)	93(8)	94(6)	86(6)	0	0
Peppers	0	0	1	70(25)	96(13)	98(8)	95(8)	70(9)	0
Radish	0	42(29)	76(11)	97(6)	95(4)	97(4)	95(3)	0	0
Spinach	83(63)	96(23)	91(12)	82(7)	52(6)	28(5)	32(6)	0	0
Sweet Corn	0	0	47(22)	97(12)	97(7)	98(4)	91(4)	88(3)	10
Tomatoes	0	0	82(43)	98(14)	98(8)	97(6)	83(6)	46(9)	0
Turnips	1	14	79(5)	98(3)	99(2)	100(1)	99(1)	99(1)	88(3)
Watermelon	0	0	0	17	94(12)	90(5)	92(4)	96(3)	0

NOTE: In South Central Oregon soil temperatures rise very fast once the soil reaches 50 degrees.