

Planting a Potato Garden



Learning Intentions:

- To learn that potatoes come from a plant
- To learn that potatoes grow underground
- To identify the roots, stem, leaves of the plant

What you will need:

- Photos/videos of potato plants
- 'The Enormous Potato' by Aubrey Davis
- Bag of supermarket potatoes
- Large garden planter
- General purpose potting compost (4 large bags)
- Seed potatoes (tubers) already chitted and ready for planting - early varieties for harvesting June/July
- Child friendly gardening tools

Introduction:

Read the story of 'The Enormous Potato' to introduce the children to the wonder of potatoes. Open a bag of potatoes and let children explore with their senses – What do they look/feel/smell like? Do children know where potatoes come from? (from the Supermarket or plants?). Show children pictures/videos of potatoes growing in gardens, fields, planters. Explain that we are going to grow our own potatoes in the school garden. Talk through the journey of the potato – from seed potato to chitting to planting to harvesting. Identify the roots and shoots on the seed potatoes. Tell children that the potatoes grow underground in the soil/compost.

Activity (in small groups):

Gather around the planter and plant the potato tubers in the compost with shoots pointing upwards (around 8 tubers evenly spaced). Fill only half the planter with compost, leaving room to add more compost as shoots appear. 'Earth up' with additional compost at regular intervals to just cover the shoots. Over the course of the next few weeks observe the growth of the plants. Let children take turns to water the plants (particularly when in full growth). Have fun harvesting the potatoes at the end of the growing period (this is usually when the plants start flowering). Look closely at the roots, stems and leaves. Count how many potatoes have been harvested.

Follow on activity:

With the support of the school kitchen make chips. Celebrate eating chips using the potatoes the children have grown themselves. Talk about the wonder of growing your own food.

Curriculum Links:

EYFS (3-5 yrs)

- Communication and language – *Speaking & listening, following directions*
- Physical development – *Handling garden tools and materials*
- Personal, social and emotional development – *Playing cooperatively, taking turns*
- Literacy – *shows interest in illustrations*
- Mathematics – *Counting*
- Understanding the world – *Plant growth, care for living things*

KS1 Science (5-7 yrs) Study of plants – scientific methods and skills