

Potato

Land Preparation

Potato requires fine tilled light soil for proper growth of tubers. To obtain fine tilth for potato we should undertake one deep ploughing with soil turning plough followed by two cross harrowings or five to six ploughing with local plough. Planking should be done to make the field smooth and clod-free. If the soil has not sufficient moisture during land preparation then fields are prepared after giving a pre irrigation.

Seeds and Sowing

The planting material for potato is called tuber. Whole potatoes with 3-5 cm diameter and at least 2-3 eyes, a weight of 20 grams or the same weight of cut potatoes to be used as seed. The cut pieces should be cured at 10-15^o C and 85-95% relative humidity for 4-6 days. The quantity of seed tuber required for planting one ha land is 1500-2000 kg. the tubers can be planted at a spacing of 60×15 cm² either in ridges and furrows or in flat beds.

Water Management

Irrigation is required within 7 days of planting. Then irrigation should be given at intervals of 3-4 days until first earthing up. After that irrigation should be given at intervals of 7-10 days until second earthing up. After second earthing up irrigation should be given in same way at intervals of 7-10 days. It should be very careful that irrigation water at any time should not more than 3/4th of the ridges. Irrigation should never heavy. In medium to heavy soil 3-4 irrigations shall be sufficient. On the other hand sandy soil having low water table, even 8-12 irrigations may be necessary. Time and number of irrigation may vary with the soil moisture status. Irrigation must be stopped 10-15 days before harvesting.

Weeding

Critical crop weed competition period is 25-50 DAS. The field should be free from weeds during this period. Manual, mechanical or different cultural weed control practices should be adopted. 2-3 hand hoeing help to suppress the weeds as well as loose the soil, increase soil aeration and enhance the growth of potatoes. Different botanical or mycoherbicides can also be used and synthetic chemical herbicides should strictly be avoided.

Harvesting

Crop becomes ready for harvesting when 50-70 % potato stems and leaves turn yellow colour. Potatoes should be harvested when the vines will be die. At least 15 days before harvesting green haulms of potato at the top of ground should be cut to allow the thickening of tuber skin, to increase the potato weight and to completely mature the tubers. Then mature tubers are harvested with the help of spade or country plough.

Post Harvest Management

After harvesting cut, rotted, diseased tubers should be discarded before sending it to the warehouse or cold storage. Clean and selected potato tubers should be stored in warehouse or cold storage for future use.