

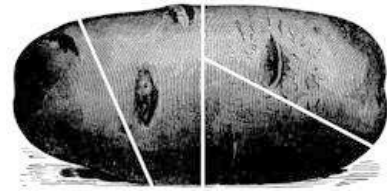
Emergency Preparedness
and
Family Home Storage
Mike's World News ♦ FoodStorage.MikesWorld.org
Trash Can Potatoes

Want a fun, low on space way to grow potatoes? Grow them in a garbage can!

With either a new a garbage can (or a used one that is super-clean), drill several 1/2 drainage holes in the bottom and on the sides close to the bottom. In the bottom of your garbage can, place a layer of shredded newspaper or old junk mail. This helps to keep the soil that you add on top of this moist and also helps to keep the soil from finding its way out of the drain holes to make a mess. You then fill the can with about 6 inches of good potting soil, and if you like, some fertilizer. I personally would use the "square foot gardening" mix of 1/3 peat moss, 1/3 compost and 1/3 asbestos-free vermiculite.



Take a few seed potatoes and cut them up, leaving several eyes on each piece. Alternatively, you can use regular store potatoes, but they may not grow as well. Plant the potato pieces in the six inches of soil, leaving several inches between each seed. You cover these seed potatoes with soil (about an inch), and water them.



The potato plants will sprout. When the vines grow 4" high, you add compost, more soil, or straw to the garbage can, covering all but 1" of the vine. You keep doing this until the garbage can is completely full. It is very important that you do not let the soil get dried out; at the same time, don't let your potatoes sit in soggy water.



You then have the seed potatoes at the bottom and several plants that have grown up to the height of the garbage can. If needed, you can stake up the vines that grow out of the top of the can. The vines will flower, and then potatoes will grow all up the length of the vine.

You can gently dig right in whenever you want a potato. When you dig in to get one while the vine is alive, this is a "new potato", sometimes called a "baby potato". They are extremely tasty when fresh from the plant. The "new potato" will not store long, so eat them soon after picking them. When your flowers start to fade, your stalks will start to turn yellow. Your big potatoes are growing now.



You can get up to 40 lbs or more from one season's growth!

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