

Potato seed-piece fungicide treatments are often helpful in obtaining better stands and yields. Protection from invasion of soil-borne organisms may result in a reduction of seed-piece decay after planting. Seed treatment is not, however, a cure for lack of sanitation, poor seed handling and for poor seed environments either before or after planting.

Planting Dates	
Area/Dates	Days to harvest
South Florida — September to December Everglades: Sept. 15-Oct. 5 and Jan. 10-Feb. 15 Southwest: Oct. 10-Oct. 31 Dade County: Nov. 15-Jan. 1	85-110
Central Florida — December to February	85-110
North Florida — January to February Hastings: Dec. 20-Feb. 15	85-110

### Cultivars

Potato cultivars differ in skin color, time of maturity, yield, appearance and marketing qualities as well as in disease resistance. A cultivar that may be excellent when grown in north Florida may not do well in south Florida and *vice versa*. Before planting an unknown cultivar, check with your local Extension Agent and consult the updated recommended variety listing for Florida from your local Extension Office.

The following are cultivars that have demonstrated excellent results in at least one area in Florida and are recommended for production:

**Sebago:** Standard white cultivar. Excellent for chips. Smooth, good shape. Some disease resistance to brown rot.

**Atlantic:** White tubers are excellent for chips. Tubers smooth, block-round in shape. Susceptible to brown rot but resistant to corky ringspot.

**LaChipper:** Medium-maturing Irish Cobbler type, white skin with very white flesh. Good chipper.

**Superior:** A white cultivar resistant to corky ringspot disease. Should only be planted late in season since it recovers poorly from adverse weather.

**Hudson:** A white cultivar adapted to marl soils. Oblong tubers, white skin and shallow eyes. Resistant to corky ringspot.

**Pungo:** Round, white cultivar, recommended only where corky ringspot virus is present in the soil. This variety is highly susceptible to bacterial brown rot.

**Chieftan:** Dark red, slightly russeted skin. Smooth, uniform shape with shallow eyes. Good yields.

**Red LaSoda:** A dark red-skinned cultivar, with attractive, fairly smooth, white flesh. A good

yielding, medium early variety of high quality. Standard red cultivar in northeast Florida. Susceptible to brown rot and corky ringspot.

**LaRouge:** Medium to late-maturing. Smooth attractive red skin, white to cream-colored flesh. Earlier than LaSoda. Standard cultivar in Dade County.

**Other Cultivars:** Norchip, Kennebec, Centennial, Belrus, Belchip.

### Fertilization

Potatoes are grown in a wide range of soil types in Florida. Grower fertilizer programs should be based on soil type, soil pH, cultivar and irrigation use, along with the cropping history and soil test analysis of the fields to be used.

**Soil pH.** Potatoes grow over a wide pH range (5.0 to 7.8). Low and high soil pH reduce phosphorus availability along with minor element availability. In mineral and organic soils where scab-resistant varieties are grown, a pH of 6.0 to 6.5 is optimum. Where scab is a problem and scab-susceptible cultivars are grown, the pH should be maintained between 5.0 to 5.2 or above 7.2. Nutrient levels then should be adjusted for availability.

**Micronutrients.** A general guide for adequate micronutrients in mineral soils is the addition of 5 lb of manganese (Mn), 3 lb of copper (Cu), 3 lb Zinc (Zn), 4 lb iron (Fe) and 1.5 lb of boron (B) per acre. These micronutrients can be obtained from mixtures of oxides, sulfates and chelates. Higher rates are necessary to overcome the tendency of micronutrients to be tied up by the organic matter in soils and by the high pH of marl soils.

On new organic soils, a broadcast application of 12 lb of Cu, 8 lb of Mn and 1 lb of B per acre is recommended before any crop is planted. Where Mn levels are low, dolomitic limestone can be used or magnesium sulfate (MgSO<sub>4</sub>) can be added to the fertilizer applications.

**Primary nutrients.** The common forms of nitrogen fertilizer are nitrate, ammonium and urea. Potato plants can utilize either the nitrate or ammonium form in the soil. Where leafroll has been observed, the fertilizer's total nitrate/nitrogen proportion of the total nitrogen should be increased to 35 percent or greater. Peat or muck soils require little or no supplemental nitrogen due to the high levels of nitrate/nitrogen normally found in these soils. Excess nitrogen levels can decrease tuber quality, yield, and grade.

Phosphorous fertilizer is needed in all Florida soils to produce a good crop of potatoes. Soil analysis can generally be used to identify residual phosphorus from previous crops. It should be noted, how-