

Growing Potatoes in Grow Bags

Quick-Start Guide — a ZoxDeal bonus

Grow bags turn a sunny patio, balcony, or driveway corner into a potato patch — no digging, no garden beds, and a harvest window that lets you grab potatoes without uprooting the plant. This guide walks you through the full cycle, from bag to dinner plate.

1. Pick the Right Bag Size

- **7 gallons is the sweet spot for potatoes.** It gives roots room to spread and leaves space for hilling soil as the plant grows. Bags under 5 gallons stunt yields.
- Plant **3–4 seed potatoes** per 7-gallon bag. More than that crowds the bag and gives you small potatoes.
- Set bags on a sunny spot (6–8 hours of direct sun). A tray or saucer underneath protects decks from drainage stains.

2. Use the Right Soil Mix

- Potatoes need **loose, well-draining soil**. Mix roughly 60% quality potting soil, 30% compost, and 10% perlite or coco coir.
- **Do not fill bags with plain garden soil.** It compacts in containers, suffocates roots, and can carry soil diseases from previous seasons.
- Stir in a handful of balanced slow-release fertilizer at planting time.

3. Planting Depth and Spacing

- Start with only **4–6 inches of soil** in the bottom of the bag. This leaves room to add soil later (hilling).
- Place seed potatoes **eyes facing up**, about 6–8 inches apart, then cover with 3–4 inches of soil.
- Water gently after planting — moist, not soaked.

4. Watering Without Rot

- Grow bags dry out faster than garden beds because air moves through the sides. Check daily in hot weather — if the top inch is dry, water.
- Water **deeply and slowly** until a little drains from the holes. Shallow daily sprinkles encourage weak surface roots.
- Never let bags sit in puddles. Good drainage is the whole point of the holes in the sides and bottom.

5. Hilling: The Secret to Bigger Harvests

Potatoes form on the buried part of the stem, not on the roots. Every time the green stems grow about 6 inches taller, add a few more inches of soil around them — this is called **hilling**. Keep going until the soil is a few inches from the bag's top. More buried stem means more potatoes, and buried tubers never turn green from sun exposure.

- Hill in the cool of the morning to avoid stressing the plant.
- Stop hilling once the bag is nearly full; let the plant finish its growth.
- Any tuber that pushes above the soil and turns green should be discarded — green potatoes taste bitter and are not good to eat.

6. Harvesting Through the Window

About 2–3 weeks after the plant flowers, you can start “stealing” new potatoes: peel back the velcro flap, reach in gently, and take the largest tubers while leaving the small ones and the plant undisturbed. Press the flap closed when done. This is the harvest window's real advantage — a normal pot forces you to dump everything out.

- For the **main harvest**, wait until the vines yellow and die back completely (about 2 weeks after flowering ends for early varieties, longer for maincrop).
- Stop watering once the vines start dying — this toughens the skins for storage.
- Tip the bag on its side and sift through the soil. It is faster than digging, and you will not stab potatoes with a fork.

7. Curing and Storing

- Brush off loose soil but **do not wash** potatoes you plan to store.
- **Cure** them 1–2 weeks in a dark, ventilated spot around 50–60°F. Curing thickens the skins and heals small nicks.
- Store cured potatoes in a cool, dark, ventilated place (35–50°F is ideal) — a paper bag in a dark cupboard works. Light turns them green; moisture rots them.
- Eat any cut or damaged potatoes first; store only firm, unblemished ones.

8. Reusing Your Bags

- After harvest, dump the soil (compost it or spread it on beds), scrub the bag with mild soapy water, and let it dry fully in the sun.
 - Fold flat and store dry. A quality bag lasts several seasons.
 - Rotate crops: avoid planting potatoes (or tomatoes) in the same bag soil two years in a row to limit disease buildup.
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Prepared by ZoxDeal as a free bonus for readers of our grow bag reviews. Growing conditions vary by climate — treat this as a starting guide and adjust watering and timing to your weather.