

Potato



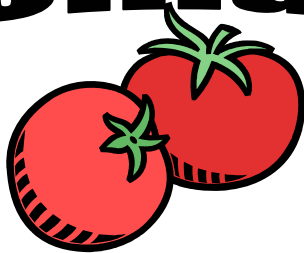
Potatoes are said to have originated in the mountains of South America in Peru. It is thought that the Incas were the ones who originally domesticated the potato around 200 BC, and developed over 200 varieties of potato, including the "Irish" white potato we often eat today. The potato only arrived in Europe in the 16th century when the Spanish conquistadors brought it home with them after conquering Peru. At first, Europeans resisted eating potatoes. Today potatoes are grown all around the world and are a staple food for many.

Cucumber



The cucumber is native to India and may have been domesticated there as long as 3,000 years ago. The cucumber later spread to China, then to Greece and Italy, where the ancient Romans adapted it into their cuisine. Eventually all of Europe followed suit. There is evidence of cucumber cultivation in France in the 9th century and England in the 14th century. The cucumber finally made the journey to the Americas in the 16th century. Today, cucumbers are commonly eaten raw or pickled, are used in the beauty industry to treat acne and other facial skin problems (ever had a cucumber mask? It really works!) and are commonly used to reduce puffiness around the eyes.

Tomato



The tomato originated in the same region as the potato, in the Andes Mountains of South America. The tomato somehow migrated north to Central America and Mexico in pre-Columbian times, where it was cultivated by the Aztecs. Again, the tomato did not make it to Europe until the 16th century, where southern Europeans (especially Italians) wasted no time in incorporating the tomato into their cooking. Who can imagine Italian food without tomatoes? The British and Americans, however, held the tomato in high suspicion, believing it to be poisonous, until the 18th century.

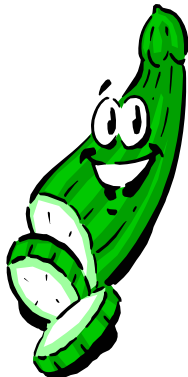
Peanut



Archaeological records show that peanuts were in cultivation between 300 and 2500 BC in the Peruvian desert oases of South America. The first written account of the crop is found with the Spanish entry into Hispanola in 1502, where the Arawak peoples cultivated it under the name of mani. The peanut, also known as groundnut, earthnut, monkeynut, and goobers is not a true nut but rather a legume much like the bean or a pea. Peanut is used for different purposes: food (raw, roasted or boiled, cooking oil), animal feed (pressings, seeds, green material, straw), and industrial raw material.

Cucumber Growing Tips

- Plant cucumbers 6-12 inches apart and ½ -1 inch deep.
- Cucumbers grow best in full sunlight and loose soil.
- It is good to spade with a shovel and turn the soil in the area you are going to plant, removing any rocks or other debris.
- Cucumbers grow best with some fertilizer. Scatter one cup of 10-10-10 for each ten-foot row, working it into the soil before planting.
- Cucumber roots reach down 36 to 48 inches, so do not plant where tree roots will rob them of water and nutrients.
- When they start growing, be careful not to step on the ends of the vines - this is the terminal growing point of the plant.
- Cucumbers will usually take 40 to 55 days from seeding to first picking.



Potato Growing Tips

- Cut the seed tubers into pieces weighing about 2 ounces (these are called *seed pieces*).
- Make sure there is at least one "eye" or bud on each piece.
- Prepare a deep, loose seedbed. If desired, apply a small amount of low-nitrogen fertilizer such as 5-10-10.
- Plant seed pieces about 4 inches deep with the eyes facing up. Space them about 12 inches apart.
- Either grow the plants in a very large, deep pot, or plant them in a raised bed garden.
- If growing outdoors, after a one or two-month period, hill the rows by drawing soil up against the base of the plants. This guards the developing new tubers against turning green and therefore **toxic** from exposure to sunlight.
- Water plants thoroughly once a week when rainfall is inadequate.
- Begin harvesting when tubers reach the size you prefer (probably around 5-6 months after planting). Larger, more mature tubers have thicker skin and will store better than small, thin-skinned, "new potatoes".



Peanut Growing Tips

- Peanuts like a well-worked sandy soil that is high in organic matter.
- The pegs have difficulty penetrating soil that has a high clay content.
- Plant seeds from shelled raw peanuts 1 to 3 inches deep.
- Space both seeds and transplants 6 to 8 inches apart.
- Keep soil moisture even until the plants start to flower, then water less.
- Blind (empty) pods are the result of too much rain or humidity at flowering time.
- Use a heavy mulch to help the pegs become established.
- The time from planting to harvest is 120 to 150 days.
- Pull up the whole plant and let the pods dry on the vine.
- You can plant raw peanuts from the grocery. Virginia Jumbo matures in 135 days.



Tomato Growing Tips

- Locate the tomato garden in an area of full sun.
- If desired, spread several inches of compost around the plants.
- Compost mulch helps control weeds and retains soil moisture.
- Water tomatoes at their base.
- If desired, use a high phosphorus, water-soluble fertilizer such as 12-52-17 or 15-30-15 diluted to 1/2 strength. (These are often sold as powdered concentrates.)
- Stake and prune plants to a single leader or main stem. Remove the "suckers" or small stems that form at the junction of leaves and the main stem. This produces earlier and slightly larger fruit.

