

Plant Some Spudatoes

Background Info and Fun Facts

- The potato comes from the Andes and was brought to Ireland by Sir Walter Raleigh.
- In WW II, fish and chips were the only foods in Britain which were not rationed!
- In 1845, a plant disease called potato blight rotted the potatoes through their leaves. It was only when people dug their crop that they realised the potatoes had turned to mush.
- People were reduced to eating grass and plants and stealing grain from landlords to stay alive.
- It is hard to tell exactly how many died from starvation, other diseases or left the country but in 1841 the population was 8,175,000 and in 1851 it fell to 6,552,385



Curriculum Links

Subject	Strand	Strand Unit
Science	Living things, environmental awareness and care	Plant life, caring for the environment
History	Local studies, life, society, work and history in the past	The famine in Ireland

Lesson Content

1. Potatoes are the easiest plants to grow in raised beds, tyres or bags.
2. Plant a first early variety in school from St. Patrick's Day onwards, about 30cm deep in soil or compost.
3. As soon as the shoots appear, cover them with more soil. This is called earthing up and will help give a bigger crop. Water well and watch out for frost. It will kill the plant so cover with newspaper if needed.
4. The crop will be ready when above ground growth is still green and the flowers have opened but dig as near to the end of June as possible.



Resources

First early potato seed, trowels, soil or compost, grow bags, wooden signs and markers.

Teacher Hints and Tips

- Have a potato growing competition in your class. When each child plants their potato, get them to put a stick beside it with their name, the spud's name, the type and the date on it.
- When you dig them, have a fancy dress potato fashion show and cut the potatoes up and make wedges, chips or mash for lunch!
- Research the famine in Ireland and sketch famine scenes.



Web Links

- www.potato.ie for teaching resources, videos, recipes and fun stuff for pupils on the potato
- www.schoolearthed.ie + Paddy's School Garden + Potatoes to see a video by Paddy Madden on sprouting potatoes

Spring - An tEarrach

March – Márta