



# sweet potato

growing instructions  
and recipes

# How to Grow Sweet Potatoes in Vermont

Sweet potatoes are grown from slips, which are cuttings from a parent vine. The slips grow best in a loose, sandy or silty soil that drains well. If sweet potatoes are grown in a rich dark soil they may discolor but are still good to eat.

**Transplant** the slips into garden beds during June, once nighttime temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees. Transplant in the late afternoon or on an overcast day. Lay the slips on their sides with 2/3 of the slip buried a half inch under the soil. Water enough to keep the soil moist, but not saturated.

**Plant** the slips 10 to 18 inches apart in rows that are three to four feet apart. The rows or raised bed should be elevated 4 to 8 inches above the ground level to allow the sweet potatoes room to form.

**Keep the cuttings watered** while they are getting established. The leaves that were originally on the planted slips will dry up and fall off leaving just the vine stem. New leaves will emerge from the cuttings as the slips become established.

**Hoe** around the vines to cultivate weeds and mulch with hay if desired. The sweet potato vines will cover the ground reaching 5 to 10 feet in length.

## Sweet Potato Care

**Pest Control** - Deer love sweet potato leaves, so be sure your planting area is fenced if deer are a problem. A flying gold colored beetle may chew round holes in the leaves. The vines are tough and will keep growing despite insect damage.

**Harvesting** - Sweet potatoes are dug and harvested in late September through mid October, a day or two before the first predicted frost. Most of the sweet potatoes will be just below the parent plant. Each plant can produce up to six sweet potatoes.

**Curing and Storing** - After harvesting, dry the sweet potatoes on the ground for two or three hours. Allow them another 10 to 14 days to cure at room temperature or above, before storing the sweet potatoes at a temperature between 50 and 60 degrees F.

Unlike Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes should not be kept cold in a garage, refrigerator or outbuilding. If properly cured and stored, they will keep until April. Enjoy!



*Vermont Community Garden Network*

# Sweet Potato Mac & Cheese

*www.eatingwell.com*

Sweet potato is the base for the sauce. The bright orange color tricks your eyes into thinking it's loaded with cheese, but there's half as much cheese as a traditional recipe.

*Serves 4*

- 8 ounces whole-wheat elbow noodles (2 cups)
- 1 medium sweet potato (about 12 ounces)
- 2 cups nonfat milk
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 1/4 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 3 tablespoons coarse dry whole-wheat breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat broiler. Coat a 2-quart broiler-safe baking dish with cooking spray, vegetable oil or butter.

Cook noodles in a large pot of boiling water until just tender, 7 to 9 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Meanwhile, prick sweet potato with a fork. Microwave on high until tender all the way to the center, 7 to 10 minutes.

Whisk milk, flour and garlic in a large saucepan. Heat over medium heat, whisking frequently, until steaming and hot, but not boiling. Remove from heat.

As soon as the sweet potato is cool enough to handle, cut open and scoop the flesh into the steaming milk. Puree with an immersion blender or transfer to a blender and puree just until smooth, then return to the pot.

Add cheese, mustard, salt and pepper and stir until the cheese melts. Add pasta and peas and stir to coat. Transfer to the baking dish. Combine breadcrumbs and oil and sprinkle on the pasta. Broil until the top is light brown and crispy, 1 to 2 minutes.

## Sweet Potato Hummus

*www.spoonforkbacon.com*

This colorful hummus variation is great with bread, tortilla chips or fresh vegetables. *Makes 2 cups*

1 sweet potato, peeled, chopped and boiled until fork tender  
½ (14.5 ounce) can garbanzo beans, drained  
3 tablespoons tahini  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 garlic clove  
½ lemon, juiced  
1 tablespoon cumin  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
dash nutmeg  
salt and pepper to taste  
extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

Place ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth.

Adjust seasonings and stir.

Top with a small drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkle of cumin.

## Sweet Potato Smoothie

*www.spoonforkbacon.com*

Great for breakfast or dessert, and a good way to use up leftover sweet potato. *Serves 2*

3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled, boiled, mashed, and chilled  
1 ½ cups cold sweetened almond milk  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom  
Optional: ½ cup vanilla Greek yogurt, 1 tablespoon raw honey

Pour all ingredients into a blender.

Puree mixture until smooth, adding more almond milk (1 to 2 tablespoons at a time) as needed, if mixture is too thick.

Pour into 2 glasses and serve.

# Sweet Potato & Kale Frittata with Goat Cheese

[www.vegetariantimes.com](http://www.vegetariantimes.com)

Two fall favorites are paired here in a frittata that's bursting with color, flavor, and texture. Crumbled goat cheese adds a creamy tang, but you could substitute any other type of grated or crumbled cheese. *Serves 4*

1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces  
8 large eggs  
1 Tbs. Dijon mustard  
1 tsp. apple cider vinegar  
1 Tbs. olive oil  
1 small onion, diced  
4 large curly kale leaves, ribs removed, leaves torn into 2-inch pieces  
½ cup crumbled goat cheese

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Place sweet potato pieces in medium microwave-safe bowl. Add ½ cup water, cover, and microwave on high power 5 minutes, or until tender. Drain.

Meanwhile, whisk together eggs, mustard, and vinegar; season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Add oil to large ovenproof skillet and place on medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté 3 minutes, or until onion begins to soften.

Add kale, and cook 2 minutes, or until kale is wilted but still bright green. Add sweet potato, and toss to blend, arranging vegetables over bottom of skillet.

Carefully pour eggs over top without displacing vegetables. Cook 3 minutes, or just until bottom of frittata is set.

Transfer skillet to oven. Bake 10 minutes, or until frittata is set in center.

Sprinkle with cheese; let stand 1 to 2 minutes to soften cheese or put under broiler. Cut frittata into wedges and serve.

# Roasted Sweet Potato Salad With Black Beans & Chili Dressing

*Mark Bittman, www.nytimes.com*

This fun twist on potato salad is delicious both warm and chilled. *Serves 4*

4 medium sweet potatoes (about 1½ pounds), peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks  
1 large onion, preferably red, chopped  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 to 2 tablespoons minced fresh hot chili, like jalapeño  
1 clove garlic, peeled  
Juice of 2 limes  
2 cups cooked black beans, drained (canned are fine)  
1 red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and finely diced  
1 cup chopped fresh cilantro.

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Put sweet potatoes and onions on a large baking sheet, drizzle with 2 tablespoons oil, toss to coat and spread out in a single layer. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Roast, turning occasionally, until potatoes begin to brown on corners and are just tender inside, 30 to 40 minutes. Remove from oven; keep on pan until ready to mix with dressing.

Put chilies in a blender or mini food processor along with garlic, lime juice, remaining olive oil and a sprinkle of salt and pepper. Process until blended.

Put warm vegetables in a large bowl with beans and bell pepper; toss with dressing and cilantro. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Serve warm or at room temperature, or refrigerate for up to a day.

## About the Sweet Potato Sale

The annual benefit sale is a partnership between **Red Wagon Plants** and the **Vermont Community Garden Network** (VCGN) to raise funds for VCGN's educational programs. VCGN provides the slips and Red Wagon Plants donates the organic potting soil, pots, and greenhouse space and hosts the sale. The slips are from Jones Family Farms in North Carolina and are approved for use in certified organic production by Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC.

**Red Wagon Plants** is a wholesale, organic plant grower with a retail outlet in Hinesburg, Vermont. Our plants are sold throughout Vermont and New Hampshire to grocery stores, garden centers, food coops, and hardware stores. We are dedicated to excellent customer service and simple, wholesome growing methods. Learn more at [www.redwagonplants.com](http://www.redwagonplants.com).



**VCGN** is a nonprofit organization that works with community and school groups all over Vermont to start, sustain, and grow gardens, building strong local food systems and vibrant educational sites. We provide technical assistance, training, funding, resources, and networking opportunities for the state's garden leaders and hands-on garden education in Burlington. Learn more at [www.vcgn.org](http://www.vcgn.org), on Facebook at [VTGardenNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/VTGardenNetwork), or (802) 861-4769.