

The most planted varieties in San Bernardino County are Porto Rico, Key West, Velvet, and Jersey. Plant spacings about 14 inches apart in rows 36 inches apart give good results. Around 200 pounds of seed roots will produce enough plants for an acre.

Seed roots are planted during March. Some growers use manure-heated hotbeds, some use artificial heat, and some bed the roots in sand without any bottom heat or cover. Those who use no bottom heat cover the bedded roots with black building paper until the first sprouts come through.

Growers shooting for an early harvest start transplanting sweet potato plants into the field in early April. Plantings can be made on into the last week of June. The safest practise is to finish planting by the end of May.

Fertilize with 40 to 80 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre. Apply the fertilizer before planting or very soon after.

Two major pests of sweet potatoes are nematodes and wireworms. Damage can be prevented by fumigating the soil. DD is the best nematode killer. EDB is a better wireworm killer, but not as effective as DD on nematodes. DDT can be used against wireworms, but not nematodes. Most growers are using 3 to 4 gallons of EDB. This treatment usually gives good wireworm control and some help against nematode.

Sweet potatoes are deep rooted, for vegetables. Irrigations should wet the soil 4 to 5 feet deep. Water at about 10-day intervals is usually satisfactory. Around 24 acre inches for the season will be needed.

Several things will help get a good stand of plants. They are:

1. Firm seed beds. Prepare beds early and let settle.
2. Good pre-irrigation if soil is not high in moisture.
3. Use plenty of transplanting water.
4. Use disease free plants.

You can do a great deal to eliminate black rot, stem rot, and scurf if you will hill-select disease free seed roots in the field at harvest time. Then you must follow through with sanitary practises. For details, see your farm advisor at 566 Lugo Avenue, San Bernardino; Telephone 2134.

Harvesting is most often done with a potato-digger. Plowing out sweet potatoes will produce fewer bruises and better appearing roots, but many growers think this method is too slow. Some growers use a "roto-beater" to remove the vines before harvest. Others cut off as much of the vine as possible with coulter ahead of the digger. The remaining vines are snapped off when the roots are picked up.

The roots are picked up by hand and put into apple boxes. Roots are then graded for market. The final pack is in either lugs or apple boxes. Many are now using clean lugs with paper and attractive labels for their best grades going to market.

Sweet potato grades in use for the Los Angeles market are arbitrary. Local usage calls for a "No. 1", "No. 2", and Jumbo. As these grades do not actually follow state or U. S. Standards, it is best to visit the produce market or several other growers if you are not familiar with what is required.

WHAT DOES IT COST YOU TO GROW SWEET POTATOES?
8,000 Lbs Per Acre

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	PER ACRE	PER CWT	PER ACRE	PER CWT
Land Preparation				
Clean up field - 1 x	\$ 2.00			
Plow - 1 x	5.00			
Disc - 2 x	4.00			
Float - 1 x	1.25			
Fumigate soil (See Materials)	-			
Make ridges	3.00			
TOTAL LAND PREPARATION	15.25	\$.19		
Planting (And Pulling)	36.00	.45		
Cultural Operations				
Hoeing - 3 x	12.00			
Cultivation - 5 x	10.00			
Apply fertilizer	3.00			
Irrigation - 10 x (24 acre inches)	24.00			
Miscellaneous	5.00			
TOTAL CULTURAL	54.00	.68		
Materials				
Irrigation water - 24 acre inches	24.00			
Soil fumigation (includes labor)	35.00			
Plants - 14,000	58.00			
Fertilizer - 400# ammonium sulfate	13.00			
Lugs, labels, paper, lids for 1s & 2s	40.00			
Field boxes	9.25			
TOTAL MATERIALS	179.25	2.24		
Harvesting				
Vine removal (roto-beat, etc)	10.00			
Digging	15.00			
Picking up	32.00			
Hauling	12.00			
TOTAL HARVESTING	69.00	.86		
Packing	64.00	.80		
Cash overhead costs				
General expense	14.82			
Taxes	12.00			
Insurance	2.50			
TOTAL CASH OVERHEAD	29.32	.37		
Depreciation (Included in Rates)	-	-		
Land Rent or Interest	75.00	.94		
TOTAL ALL COSTS	\$521.82	\$6.53		

You can estimate your own costs by filling in the last two columns.