

Sweet Potato

Ipomoea batatas · Morning glory family

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Tender perennial, grown as annual from slips

MATURITY 100–170 days



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Moderate



SOIL PH
5.5–6.5



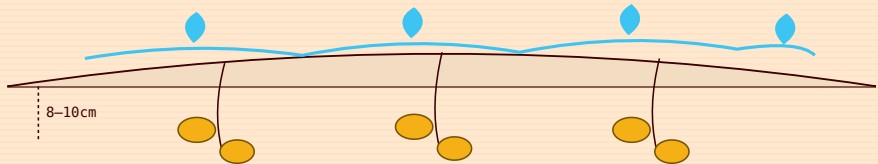
SPACING
35cm × 90cm



DEPTH
8–10cm

01 Ridge planting

Slips are laid horizontally along a raised ridge with 2–3 leaf nodes buried. Tubers form at the buried nodes along the stem, not just at the base — the ridge keeps them easy to find at harvest.



02 Planting

METHOD	Grow or buy rooted slips; lay horizontally along a mounded ridge with 2–3 nodes buried.
SOIL	Loose, sandy-loam, well-drained. Rich soil grows more leaf and fewer tubers.
TIMING	Plant in late spring once soil is reliably warm above 18°C.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

03 Growing care

- Water deeply while establishing; ease off once vines are running to favour tubers over leaf.
- Lift trailing vines occasionally so they don't root at nodes and divert energy.
- Ridge soil up at planting for drainage and easy harvesting.
- Go light on fertiliser — high nitrogen grows vines, not tubers.

04 Problems

- **Sweet potato weevil** — larvae tunnel tubers; rotate beds and hill well.
- **Fungal wilt** — improve drainage, choose resistant varieties.
- **Vine borer** — inspect regularly, remove affected sections.
- **Rodents** — protect ripening tubers near harvest time.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Leaves yellow, 100–170 days from planting, before the first frost.
METHOD	Cut back vines, then fork gently from the ridge edge inward.
CURING	Cure at 27–30°C and high humidity for 5–10 days to heal and sweeten skins.
STORAGE	Cool (13–15°C), dark, ventilated. Keeps several months. Never refrigerate.
PRESERVING	See Root Cellaring (cool, dark storage without processing) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY

Beans

Thyme

Dill

Marigold

AVOID NEARBY

Pumpkin

Squash

ROTATION NOTE

Avoid replanting root crops in the same bed for 2 years; follow with legumes to rebuild nitrogen.