

POTATO CULTIVATION: EXPERIENCE SPEAKS

Shri Narayanbhai Chawda is a successful young farmer and agriculture graduate. Two years ago in the village Gomchi, on the banks of river Kharun, he purchased 33 acres of uncultivated land and developed into such a good farm, by seeing which anyone can feel surprise. It is the specialty of Narayanbhai that he brings into practice whatever he has read or heard about cultivation of any crop. He keeps its record, tells about his experiences whosoever asks. We are presenting regarding cultivation of potatoes his interview.

Q. Which variety is best suited for climate of this place?

Ans. It is not possible to recommend the best one based on my limited experience, but on the basis of my last year experience, I am telling about some varieties procured from Shimla, Pantnagar etc.

Variety	Date of sowing	Date of digging	Yield / acre
Kufri Sinduri	17.10.68	24.1.69 (99 days)	377½ maunds
Kufri Chandramukhi	17.10.68	1.1.69 (76 days)	150 maunds
Kufri Chamatkar	17.10.68	21.1.69 (96 days)	160 maunds
Up-to-date*	-	- (90 days)	134 maunds

For good yield, I selected K. Sinduri. K. Chandramukhi and K. Chamatkar are also very good varieties, but last year on my fields, they got infested with virus resulting in drying of haulms. But K. Sinduri was virus free. The fields on which continuous crops of chilies, tomatoes, brinjal are taken are liable for infection of this wilt. On these fields K. Sinduri should be raised. But after rice crop, K. Chandramukhi is better, because it matures early. K. Chamatkar is shining and fetches good price in the market. In K. Chamatkar, potatoes arise in bunches near roots, which facilitates its digging.

Q. What is your experience, about potato seed ?

Ans. My experience is that when we sow cut tubers more than half of them decay due to heat. The whole tubers of 1-1½ inches should be sown. If we sow very small size tubers, haulms get virus infected.

Sowing should be done keeping row to row distance one and half feet and tuber to tuber in rows 9 inches to get better yield. In one field, where it was sown at a distance of 11-12 inches yield reduced by one-third. When we sow at 9 inches distance, in one acre 25 mounds of potato of 1-1½ inch diameter is needed.

When eyes in tubers get activated, only them it should be sown. In one-trial, I found that when activated eyes having tubers were sown yield was 238 mounds but it reduced to 115 mounds in case of un-activated eyed tubers. Plants of germinated tubers come out within 10-15 days, while it takes a month for complete germination after sowing when tubers are sown with un-activated eyes. To activate eyes, I used to keep tubers in a closed room. Layer of tubers should not be more than 3-4 tubers thick. Before activating eyes, tubers should be treated with agallol and dried.

Q. How potato should be sown in plane beds or forming ‘Manda’?

Ans. I have seen that cultivating potatoes by forming ‘Manda’ proves to be costlier with increased expenditure of weeding. When in plane beds, on 12th and 20th days after sowing earthing is done, weeds are also destroyed side by side. But I will experiment this year on this aspect. Earthing is very essential. In my field, earthing could be done only two times. Third time whole field was covered with haulms.

