

POTATO FARMING IN KENYA.

- Before planting potatoes in a field, know the history of that field i.e. if it has recently been planted a solanaceous crop like Tomatoes, egg plant, capsicum, brinjals etc.
- This crops are affected by the same diseases as potatoes such as is Bacterial wilt which has no cure.

Land preparation.

Remove shrubs, stumps and log from the field. Cultivate to a fine tilth

Seed selection

Use certified seeds. This is a seed which:

- Grows fast
- Is disease free
- Gives higher yields
- Gets better prices in the market.

You will get certified potato seeds from good suppliers.

If using seeds from your shamba, select and mark healthy ones while still growing.

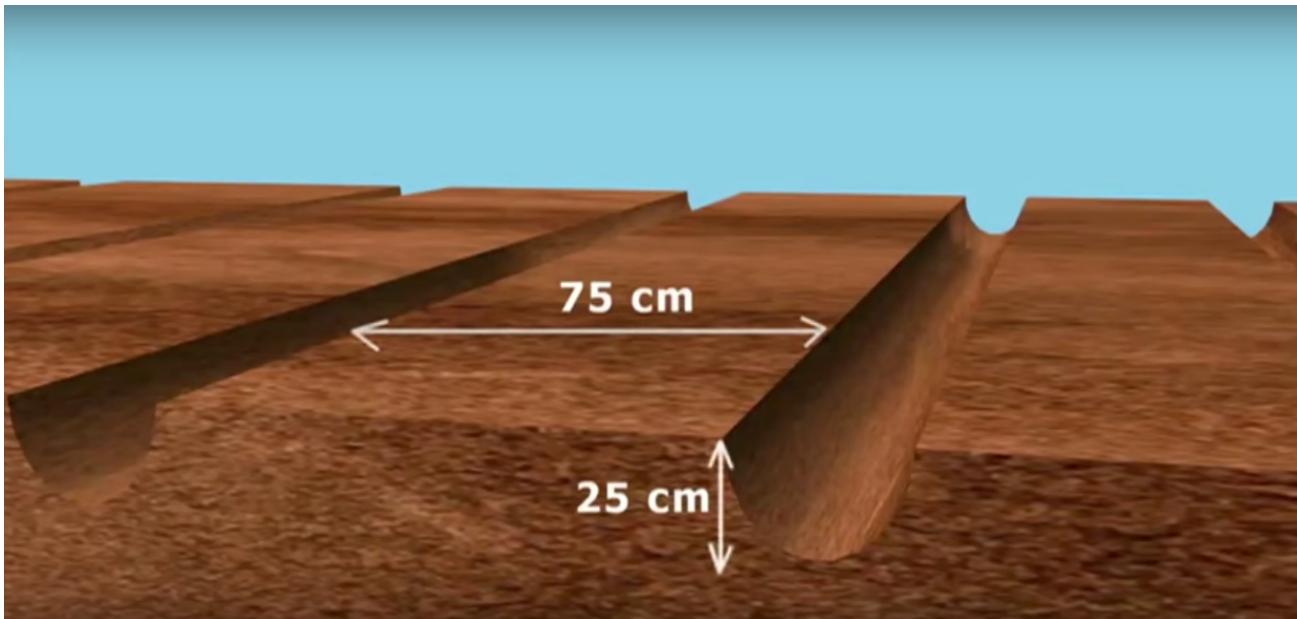


Select seeds free from cuts, disease free, has sprouts and with the size of an egg

Planting

To plant potatoes:

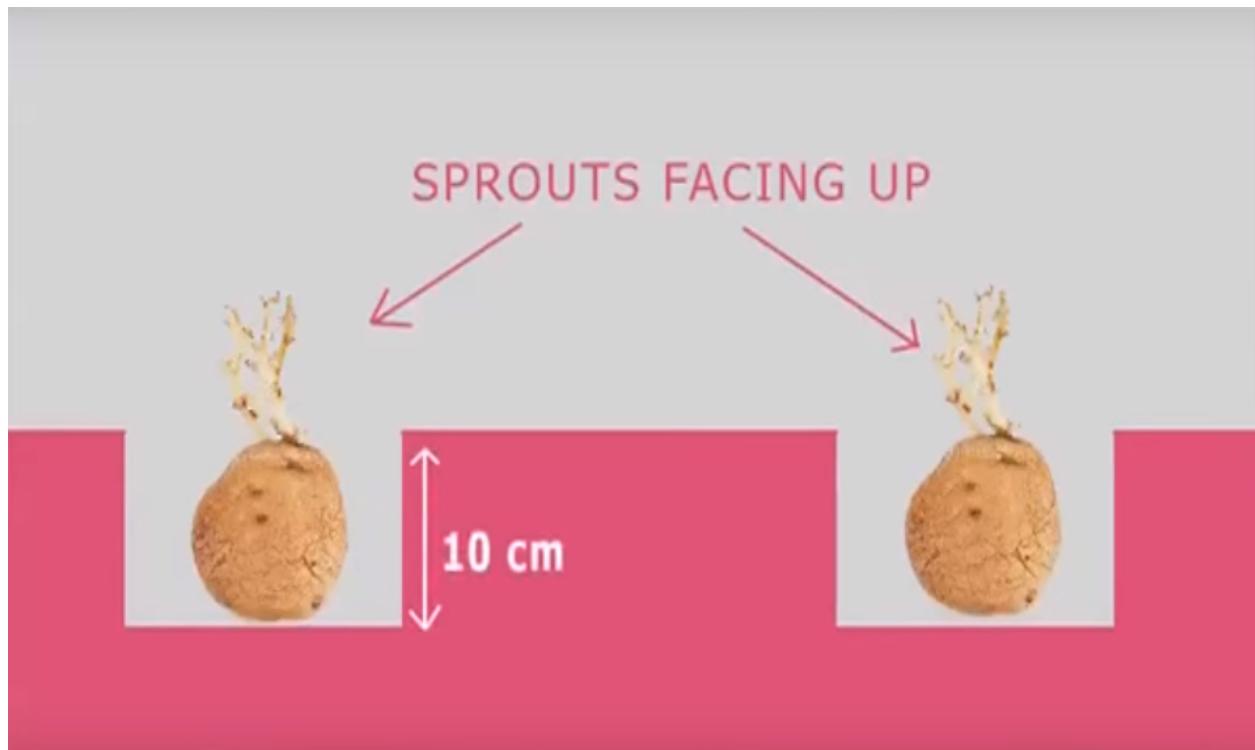
1. Make holes 30 cm in a row with rows 75cm apart.



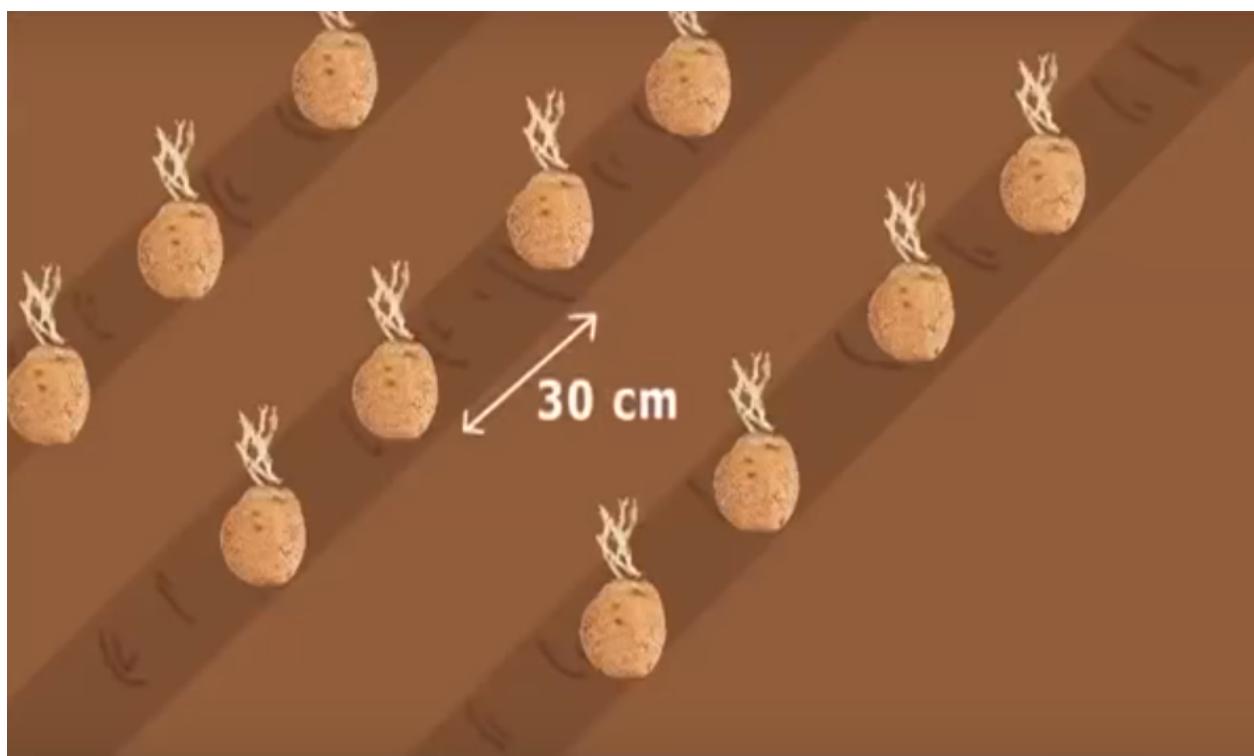
2. Put one handful of manure and 10gm of either DAP or NPK and mix well with the soil.



3. Mark shallow holes at a depth of 10cm



4. Plant at 30 cm apart with sprouts facing up- Put the tubers above the soil and cover with light soil.



Management

1. Remove weeds as they compete for nutrients, water and space. They also act as alternate host for pests and diseases. Weed by Hand or use a jembe.



2. Hill when potato is 15 – 25cm tall by heaping soil around the roots. This give space for tubers to grow big and avoid greening of potatoes which reduces the quality.



Common pests and diseases that attack potatoes

Pests

The common pests are Bollworms, thrips, whiteflies, leafminers and any other hopping insect. Insects eat potato stems/leaves. The Leaf miners make lines on the leaves. Whiteflies are small white insects which suck the juice from crops and are found below the leaves.



Leafminers make white patterns on the leaves



Whiteflies are insects which suck juice from crops

Diseases

1. Bacterial wilt.

- Has no cure and can only be controlled by using certified seeds, crop rotation and use of clean farming tools.
- Dig out sick plants with a ball of soil, put away from all other crops to dry then burn



2. Blight

- Blight is another common disease in potatoes.
- Control using fungicides like MASTER/ MISTRESS and others.



For more on Pests and diseases contact iShamba on 0711082606 or SMS to 21606.

Storage

After harvest, store the potatoes and wait for good prices at the market. Use bags or a store. It must be dry and well ventilated.