Transcript: 337 lbs of Potatoes! NO digging, NO watering, and VERY LITTLE work!

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**[00:00:05]** Hey guys, Derrick and Paula here from Back  
to Reality.

**[00:00:08]** So last week, we showed you how we’ve been  
working to expand our garlic bed, but as

**[00:00:12]** some of you may recall, we also decided to the same thing with our potatoes. So today we're gonna show you

**[00:00:17]** how we did that and then do our final harvest

**[00:00:19]** to see how it all turned out.

**[00:00:21]** Now last year, we grew our first ever potato  
crop in one of our Ruth Stout beds, and honestly

**[00:00:26]** it was incredibly rewarding, because it was  
super easy and resulted in a pile of food.

**[00:00:32]** All we did was lay out some spoiled hay on  
top of the grass the previous autumn, and

**[00:00:36]** then in the spring, we pulled the hay apart,  
tossed in the spuds, and covered them back

**[00:00:41]** up until it was time to harvest.

**[00:00:43]** That was it.

**[00:00:44]** No digging, tilling, watering, or weeding.

**[00:00:47]** We did add a bit of extra mulch on top as  
the plants grew to keep the sun off the tubers,

**[00:00:52]** but when compared to the usual method of hilling  
with earth, we can confidently say that these

**[00:00:57]** potatoes were no work at all.

**[00:00:59]** If you haven’t seen our previous videos   
on this method, we highly recommend you

**[00:01:03]** check those out first, so I’ve put  
some links to the description.

**[00:01:06]** But suffice it to say, our only regret is  
that we didn't planted WAY more of them.

**[00:01:12]** Paula and I tend eat a lot of potatoes throughout  
the year, so if we ever hope to become

**[00:01:16]** fully food-self-sufficient, one row just  
isn’t going to cut it. When we first

**[00:01:21]** started building our fence a  
few years ago, we figured 50 feet by 50 feet

**[00:01:24]** would be more than enough space.

**[00:01:27]** But as our crops increased, it quickly became  
apparent that we would eventually out-grow

**[00:01:31]** our confines.

**[00:01:32]** But a fence only protects against larger animals,  
like rabbits, raccoons, and deer, so unless

**[00:01:37]** a particular veggie is part of their diet,  
keeping them inside the fence would be of

**[00:01:42]** little benefit.

**[00:01:43]** That’s why we decided to plant our garlic  
outside the fence, and when it was time to

**[00:01:47]** expand our potato crop, it was an easy decision  
as well.

**[00:01:50]** You see, for the most part, garlic and potatoes  
only suffer from small pests, like insects

**[00:01:55]** and nematodes.

**[00:01:56]** And while these can pose serious problem  
for your plants, they can also pass

**[00:02:00]** through any normal fencing material anyway.

**[00:02:03]** So, outside the fence makes good sense.

**[00:02:08]** For the initial move, we started with a new  
much larger 20 foot x 40 foot Ruth Stout bed,

**[00:02:13]** but we have plenty of space to expand even  
further into the field, if needed.

**[00:02:17]** We’ve covered the Ruth Stout method pretty  
extensively already, so I won’t bother going

**[00:02:21]** into much detail now, but essentially, we  
mowed the area last fall, and covered it with

**[00:02:26]** a thick layer of old hay.

**[00:02:29]** Then in the spring, we decided to create walking  
paths, by removing some of the mulch.

**[00:02:33]** Our intention was to mimic the shape of a  
keyhole garden to a certain extent, in order

**[00:02:38]** to minimize the amount of paths, while also  
maximizing the amount of easily accessible

**[00:02:43]** growing space.

**[00:02:44]** This also had the side benefit of subdividing  
our plot into 7 sections so that we could

**[00:02:49]** easily separate the different varieties when  
planting.

**[00:02:52]** Plus, it also gave us an early opportunity  
to observe the Ruth Stout method in action.

**[00:02:56]** Because it had only been one winter, and yet much  
of the old grass had already decomposed, and

**[00:03:02]** no new weeds had begun to grow.

**[00:03:04]** Simply looking to the lush grasses outside  
the garden immediately highlights the difference

**[00:03:08]** you can make with just a layer of hay.

**[00:03:11]** Next came the actual planting, but once again,  
it was a simple matter of lifting the hay,

**[00:03:16]** tossing in the spuds, and dropping the hay  
back down.

**[00:03:19]** Our varieties included:

**[00:03:20]** 1 row of early season norland  
3 rows of russet

**[00:03:24]** a row of pontiac,  
another of early season warba.

**[00:03:28]** And finally, in the last row, we planted a  
mix of leftovers that we had saved from last

**[00:03:33]** years crop.

**[00:03:34]** These had simply been kept in a cardboard  
box throughout the winter, and as you can

**[00:03:38]** see, they’d grown some pretty impressive  
stolons. All in all,

**[00:03:42]** we planted about 34 lbs of seed  
potatoes, and it took us less than half an hour. We even had quite a bit of

**[00:03:47]** space left over,  
so we decided to throw in a row of onion sets,

**[00:03:50]** as well.

**[00:03:51]** And then as usual, all that was left was to wait.

**[00:03:55]** But after several weeks, the leaves began  
breaking through the mulch.

**[00:03:58]** Next came some flowers, and eventually by  
around mid summer, we began weekly, and then

**[00:04:03]** almost daily meal-sized mini-harvests.

**[00:04:07]** This continued until a couple weeks ago when  
the foliage had fully died off on our two

**[00:04:11]** rows of early varieties.

**[00:04:12]** So we decided to harvest them completely,  
and much to our delight, we gathered a combined

**[00:04:17]** total of 65 lbs.

**[00:04:19]** And now, it’s finally time to do our full  
harvest.

**[00:04:23]** Just like last year, harvesting potatoes from  
a Ruth Stout garden is a simple matter of

**[00:04:27]** pulling aside the hay to expose the tubers,  
and then collecting them.

**[00:04:32]** No tools are required, there’s no risk of  
cutting or damaging the potatoes in any way,

**[00:04:37]** and the soil never has to be disturbed.

**[00:04:40]** But speaking of the soil, keep in mind that  
one year ago, this was all thick grasses,

**[00:04:44]** weeds, and wildflowers.

**[00:04:46]** And yet now, it’s fully exposed earth with  
plenty of compost material mixed in.

**[00:04:50]** Plus, I know I mention this a lot, but honestly,  
just look at all the earthworms.

**[00:04:56]** They’re everywhere.

**[00:04:58]** And they’re not the only critters who seem  
to enjoy this natural habitat either.

**[00:05:01]** For example, we came across toads, blue spotted  
salamanders, and even a northern red bellied

**[00:05:09]** snake.

**[00:05:10]** But don’t worry, this little guy is completely  
harmless to humans, and spends most of his

**[00:05:14]** time eating grubs, slugs, and snails.

**[00:05:16]** So, he’s pretty bad news for our slimy friends,  
but he’s also an excellent form of natural

**[00:05:21]** pest control, and an important part of a healthy  
ecosystem.

**[00:05:25]** Now, I have to say, we really enjoy the process  
of harvesting potatoes in this way.

**[00:05:30]** It’s easy.

**[00:05:31]** It’s relaxing.

**[00:05:32]** And honestly it’s also a lot of fun, uncovering  
so much food and interacting with so much

**[00:05:36]** nature.

**[00:05:37]** Once everything was harvested, we collected  
them all and weighed them.

**[00:05:40]** So now let’s look at the numbers.

**[00:05:42]** As I mentioned, we initially planted approximately  
34 lbs of seed potatoes, and our first harvest

**[00:05:48]** of the earlier varieties yielded 65 lbs.

**[00:05:52]** Then there’s our weekly and daily harvests  
of young potatoes throughout the growing season,

**[00:05:56]** which we conservatively estimate to be around  
30lbs, especially considering that would

**[00:06:00]** have weighed even more if left to mature fully.

**[00:06:04]** And finally, today’s harvest weighed in  
at a whopping 242 lbs.

**[00:06:10]** Which gives us a grand total of 337.

**[00:06:14]** Or about 10 times our initial input.

**[00:06:17]** Now I know this may not break any records  
or anything, but considering how little effort

**[00:06:21]** we had to put into this, I’m still pretty  
damn impressed.

**[00:06:24]** Oh and really quickly, our onions turned out too.

**[00:06:27]** If you remember our first attempt in a new  
Ruth Stout bed last year, most were about

**[00:06:32]** golf ball size, but this year we averaged  
around tennis ball.

**[00:06:36]** So they’re still a bit small, but I’m  
pretty happy with that.

**[00:06:39]** However, this wouldn’t be much of a learning  
experience if we didn’t include a few lessons.

**[00:06:43]** So let’s chat really quickly about some of the things we  
might do differently next year.

**[00:06:47]** First of all, the paths.

**[00:06:48]** In hindsight, it would have been far better  
to actually just leave the mulch in place

**[00:06:52]** and simply not plant where we plan to walk,  
because after the potato plants begin to grow,

**[00:06:58]** the lack of vegetation between the rows would  
have clearly indicated the walking paths anyway, and

**[00:07:03]** unfortunately, without the mulch, the area quickly filled  
back in with weeds.

**[00:07:07]** Also, though we had originally planned on  
cutting our potatoes into sections

**[00:07:11]** before planting unfortunately, time constraints just simply didn’t  
allow it.

**[00:07:15]** So, we don’t yet know which way is best, but we hope to try again next year.

**[00:07:19]** Plus, as you can see, a few of the tubers  
ended up all knobby and deformed, and from

**[00:07:24]** what I’ve read, that tends to happen as  
a result of inconsistent watering, which actually

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**[00:07:40]** pretty intense rainstorms later in the summer.

**[00:07:43]** But despite how funny they may look, this shouldn’t  
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**[00:07:48]** so we’re not that concerned about it.

**[00:07:50]** However, we may consider some form of irrigation  
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**[00:07:54]** And finally, though 337 lbs is a pretty incredible harvest, it’s still likely not enough to

**[00:08:00]** keep us fed all winter while also leaving  
enough for replanting in the spring.

**[00:08:05]** So, I think we’ll probably consider expanding  
our growing area even more than we did this

**[00:08:09]** time around.

**[00:08:10]** But for now, we gonna have to figure out how the heck to store all of these.

**[00:08:14]** See you guys soon!

# Full Text (without timestamps)

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