

# VEGGIE OF THE MONTH

NC Cooperative Extension - Cleveland County Center



## Garden Connection

Nothing is more fun than digging for treasures, right? Especially if the treasures are edible! Sweet potatoes are the perfect thing to plant for those of us who like getting our hands dirty, and coming up with a tasty treat!



Planted from mid-May through mid-June, sweet potatoes can be ready for harvest just in time for the arrival of Fall.

It's as simple as:

1. Purchase transplants (or slips) from local garden center or hardware store.
2. Plant in hilled rows, 8 inches apart (slips 4" deep).
3. Keep soil moist, but not too wet.
4. When 120 days roll around, gently dig for the potatoes in the hills. If they're smaller than 3" in diameter, wait a week and try again.
5. Place the newly harvested potatoes in a warm room (kitchen) for a couple of weeks. This allows the starches to turn to sugar (curing.) Store in a cool place.
6. Reward yourself by sitting down to a nice, hot sweet potato! Yum!

## Nutritious & Delicious

Sweet potatoes are a delicious & nutritious vegetable with a naturally "sweet" taste. N.C. leads the nation in sweet potato production. They are NC's state vegetable and are often listed as a "super food" because they are packed with nutrients. Sweet potatoes are liked by many people and are always one of the family favorites enjoyed at Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

What's So Great About Sweet Potatoes? They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin A & beta-carotene (promotes eye & skin health, protects against infections)
- Potassium
- Vitamin C
- Fiber

They are also good sources of: niacin, folate and iron. Sweet potatoes, like most vegetables, are low in sodium and calories and are fat and cholesterol free.

Sweet potatoes are quite versatile – they go well with meats, fruits, and other vegetables and can be prepared with sweet or savory flavors. They can be added to soups/stews, breads, cakes and pies. Sweet potatoes (SP) can often be substituted in recipes for apple, squash, pumpkin and white potatoes.

Sweet potatoes are available all year. See the NC Agriculture "[What's in Season?](#)" They originated in the tropical Americas



around 5,000 years ago. They are part of the morning glory family and are roots. Sweet potatoes are not the same as yams.

There are two basic types of sweet potatoes – the orange fleshed are more moist and sweeter. The yellow-fleshed sweet potatoes are dryer.



Sweet potatoes are sold fresh, canned and frozen. Canned sweet potatoes are often packed in heavy syrup or "candied." Use these sparingly as they are high in sugar and fats and are lower in nutrients than the fresh ones.

**Selection:** choose firm, small to medium-sized sweet potatoes with smooth skin. Avoid cracks, dark or soft spots and blemishes.

**Home storage:** store sweet potatoes in a cool, dark place and use within 3-5 weeks. Do not store in the refrigerator.

**Preparation:** Scrub potatoes well under cold running water before peeling or cooking. They are easy to prepare and can be baked, boiled or microwaved.

Refer to the NC Sweet Potato Commission website: [www.ncsweetpotatoes.com](http://www.ncsweetpotatoes.com) for a variety of sweet potato tips and recipes. Add the three sweet potato recipes listed here to your favorites and enjoy them all year!

Cleveland County Kitchen Project - Web address:  
[clevelandcountykitchen.org](http://clevelandcountykitchen.org)

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### Easy Sweet Potato Mini Muffins

- 2/3 cup mashed sweet potatoes  
(approx. 1 med. sweet potato / baked or microwaved)
- 2 Tablespoons margarine
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 cup fat-free milk
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans (optional)
- 1/4 cup golden raisins (optional) (dark raisins may be substituted)



**Directions:** Line mini muffin tin with pan liners or coat with non-stick cooking spray. In a medium mixing bowl, cream (room temp) margarine and sugar. Add egg and sweet potatoes; mix well. In a separate large mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt and spices. Alternate adding milk and sweet potato mixture to the dry ingredients. Fold in nuts and raisins. Spoon into the prepared muffin tin, filling each cup 2/3 full. Bake at 375°F for 15 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool about 5 minutes. Yield: 30 mini muffins **Variation:** Coat a 12 cup muffin tin with spray or liners. Bake @400°F 25 minutes or until done. **Nutrition Analysis per muffin:** 140 Calories, 6g Fat, 15mg Cholesterol, 240mg Sodium, 21g carbohydrate, 2g Protein. Source: Nancy Abasiekong, Extension Agent, FCS, NC Cooperative Extension, Cleveland Co. Center

### Orange and White Fries - Serves 8

- 2 medium white potatoes (3/4 to 1 lb)
- 1 large sweet potato (3/4 to 1 lb)
- 4 teaspoons vegetable oil



1. Preheat oven to 425°F
2. Place oil in mixing bowl
3. Scrub potatoes well and cut into quarters, then cut each quarter into thin strips.
4. Place strips in mixing bowl. Mix to coat evenly with oil.
5. Spread potatoes on baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes or until tender and evenly browned.

**Note:** If strips are not thin, allow more time to cook.

Serving size: 1/2 cup, 70 cal., 2.5g fat, 20mg sodium, 13g carbohydrates, 2g protein, 0mg cholesterol, 2g fiber  
Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension University

### Glazed Sweet Potatoes -Yield: 4-1 cup servings

1 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch thick slices, 1 Tablespoon Cornstarch, 1 Tablespoon brown sugar, 1/2 cup orange, 1/2 cup water

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Spray a 1 quart baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Place potato slices in the prepared baking dish.
3. In a small bowl, combine cornstarch, brown sugar, orange juice, and water. Stir well.
4. Pour over mixture over potato slices.
5. Cover and bake for 40 minutes or until potato slices are tender and glaze is thickened.

**Nutritional Analysis:** Calories 140, 0g Fat, 0g Sat. Fat, 0mg Cholesterol, 45mg sodium, 34g carbohydrates, 4g fiber, 3g Protein  
Source: University of Nebraska, Lincoln Extension

Developed by: Nancy Abasiekong, Julie Flowers and Annie Thompson

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