

Sowing of Seeds

Storage roots should be established in the seedbed, close together but not touching.

Cutting tubers crosswise into equal parts before setting, increases the number of sprouts produced by a given quantity of tubers.

Cover tubers with appr. 5 cm of soil and then a thin layer of mulch to retain moisture.

Water is necessary to keep the soil moist, but not wet.

Maintenance of Sprout

The beds will need watering from time to time, depending on the temperature.

As large numbers of plants develop, the mulch should be removed and the need for water increases rapidly.

Harvesting of Sprouts for Planting

Good, sturdy plants are essential in obtaining full stands in the field.

When the sprouts have grown to 6-10 inches long and each having 6 to 8 leaves, they should be cut and used to establish the crop. This is approximately 3-5 weeks after setting.

Nursery cuttings are made by cutting off the 6 to 8 inches tops of vigorous sprout plants at or near the surface of the media in plant beds.



NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INSTITUTE

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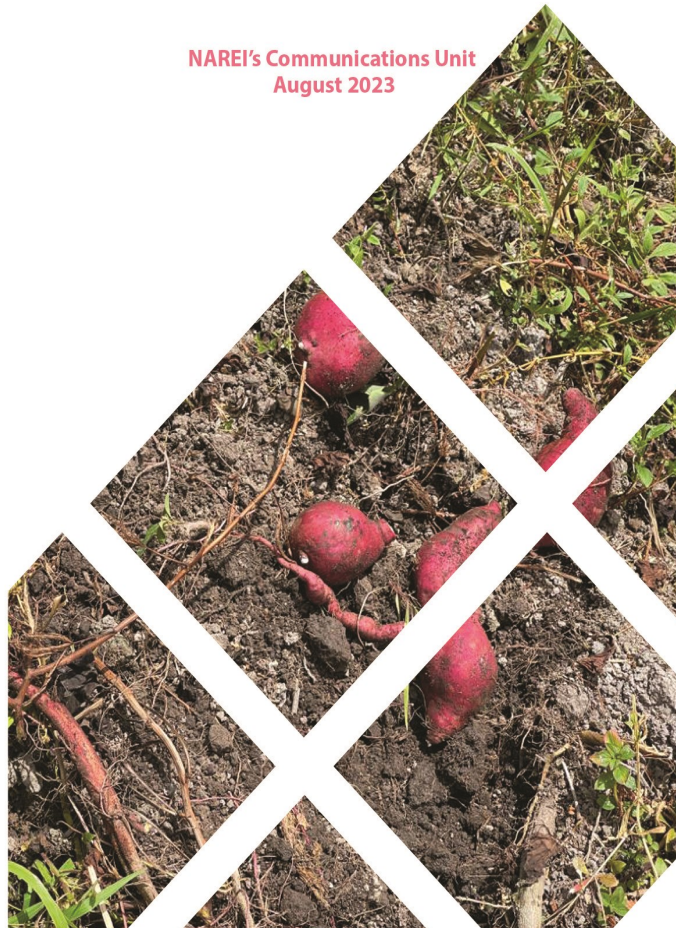
Address: Agriculture Road, Mon Repos, East Coast Demerara, Guyana.

Phone: +592-220-2812; +592-220-2841; +592-220-5730

Email: communicationsunit4@gmail.com

Website: www.narei.org.gy

NAREI's Communications Unit
August 2023



The Use of sweet potato sprouts as Planting Materials

SWEET POTATO

Ipomoea batatas



Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*), is a perennial crop usually grown as an annual for its storage roots, predominantly in the tropical and sub-tropical climates.

The sweet potato crop is versatile and adaptable. The crop had gained increase in significance globally as an important health food fostering increase in demand by health conscious consumers for the availability quality tubers and value added processed products of sweet potato.

The use of planting materials of the highest quality is essential for the achievement of successful sweet potato production

The availability of good quality planting material is a major constraint of sweet potato production.

Sprout

What is a Sprout?

Sprout is defined as a new growth of a plant, whether from seeds or other parts of the plant. Also, to grow from seed, to germinate.

Sprouts are plants grown from storage roots (seeds) - frequently used as planting materials.

Sprouts are usually less vigorous to manage in Guyana, sweet potato is generally propagated by stem cuttings (slips) which are obtained from established fields.

This method requires a lot of planting materials that is taken from older portions of the sweet potato vine, may be a potential source for insect pests & diseases.

Obtaining the vine cuttings from established fields requires considerable labour & the cuttings are more difficult to manage.



Seedbed Preparation

Seedbeds whether temporary or permanent should be conveniently located on well-drained soil where there is no danger of contamination by runoff water, disease or infested land.

Ideally, the soil should be loose and sandy, obtained from a field or other source where sweet potato have never been grown or have not been grown for the past 4 or 5 years.

A reliable source of water is essential to the location of a good nursery bed. whether from seeds or other parts of the plant.

The use of tubers for sprouts is growing slips the easy way.

It is less labour intensive and requires less pest and disease control.

Also, it is recommended that this method of obtaining planting material for sweet potato production be promoted and implemented in Guyana.

Sowing of Seeds

For sowing, seeds (tubers) should be carefully selected in the field at harvest.

Small to medium sized tubers should be uses with selection based on trueness to varietal type, colour, shape, other desirable characteristics and free from signs of disease.

To prepare planting material for one hectare, 70m² seedbed is needed.