| **Variety/Maturity** | **Yield** | **Blight Resistance** | **Boil** | **Mash** | **Chip** | **Roast** | **Bake** | **Salad** | **Crisp** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rocket 1st Early | High | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Maris Bard 1st Early | High | Fair | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Sutton Foremost 1st Early | Med | Fair | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Pentland Javelin 1st Early | High | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Sharpe’s Express 1st Early | Med | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Arran Pilot 1st Early | Med | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Marfona 2nd Early | High | Fair | Yes | Yes |  | Yes |  |  |  |
| Kestrel 2nd Early | High | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Charlotte 2nd Early | Med | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Wilja 2nd Early | High | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Cara Late main | V High | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| King Edward Early main | High | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Maris Piper Early main | High | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Estima 2nd Early | High | Fair | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No |
| Maxine Early main | High | No | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes | No |  |
| Desiree Main | V High | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Romana Main | High | Medium | General purpose | | | | | | |
| Pink Fir Apple Main | Medium | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |  |
| Sante (New) Main | High | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |  |
| Valor (New) Main | High | Yes | General purpose | | | | | | |
| Sarpo Mira (New) Main | V High | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |

The last 3 varieties have increased protection against blight and other disease.

**What to Grow**

There are dozens of different potato varieties, usually described as early, second early and maincrop potatoes. These names indicate when they crop and also give you an idea of the space you'll need, how closely and when they can be planted.

You should concentrate on the earlier types if you're short of space, and it's also worth remembering that earlies are less likely to encounter pest problems as they're lifted so much earlier in the year.

Second earlies take 16 to 17 weeks to mature after planting, so you should be able to harvest them from very late June through to the start of August.

Maincrops are ready 18 to 20 weeks after planting, so they can be lifted usually from July through to October. Maincrops take up the most space in the garden, but they tend to be the best varieties to grow if you want some for storage.

**How to Chit**

Chitting simply means encouraging the seed potatoes to sprout before planting.

Start chitting from late January in warmer parts of the country or in February in cooler areas, about six weeks before you intend to plant out the potatoes.

Each seed potato has a more rounded, blunt end that has a number of 'eyes'.

Stand the tubers with the blunt end uppermost in trays or old egg boxes, with plenty of natural light.

The potatoes are ready to be planted out when the shoots are 1.5-2.5cm (0.5-1in) long.

**How to Plant**

Plant your chitted potatoes when the soil has started to warm up, usually from mid-March or early April. Start by digging a trench 7.5-13cm (3-5in) deep, although the exact depth should vary according to the variety of potato you're planting.

Add a light sprinkling of fertiliser to your trench before you begin planting.

Plant early potatoes about 30cm (12in) apart with 40-50cm (16-20in) between the rows, and second earlies and maincrops about 38cm (15in) apart with 75cm (30in) between the rows.

Handle your chitted tubers with care, gently setting them into the trench with the shoots pointing upwards, being careful not to break the shoots. Cover the potatoes lightly with soil.

As soon as the shoots appear, earth up each plant by covering it with a ridge of soil so that the shoots are just buried.

You need to do this at regular intervals and by the end of the season each plant will have a small mound around it about 15cm (6in) high.

**Harvesting**

Your home-grown potatoes should be ready for lifting from June until September, depending on the varieties and the growing conditions. Earlies can be lifted and eaten as soon as they're ready.

This will be when above-ground growth is still green, and usually as soon as the flowers open.

Second and maincrop varieties can be kept in the ground much longer, until September, even though above-ground growth may well be looking past its best.

Two weeks before you lift the crop, cut the growth off at ground level. This should give the skins of the potatoes sufficient time to toughen up, making them far less prone to damage from lifting and easier to store.

**Waxy or Floury... Does it matter?**

Potatoes divide between floury and waxy in their consistency. Waxy potatoes have a low water content and because of this, they hold up well to boiling and chopping once cooked, ideal as new potatoes, cooked with mint and in salads, sauté and dauphinoise.

Floury potatoes have a higher water content, which means the flesh ‘collapses’ when it’s cooked, creating a rough surface which crisps up well in oil, while the insides become fluffy. These are the ones for roasting, baking, mash and chips. It’s worth having a few of both, as well as some Earlies for harvesting in June and July and some Maincrops for eating later.