

## Potato planting tips

By Frank Hodge

Although there is plenty of information on the web about growing potatoes, I wanted to share some potato growing tips for those people who have not grown potatoes here in Colorado.

From my experience, it would be to your advantage to "pre-sprout" your potatoes before planting in the ground or in containers. Pre-sprouting, also called "Chitting", will give you a much better chance of success in growing your potatoes than if you plant the seed potato as it is right now. If you look at the potato now, the "eye", or sprouting piece is about an eighth of an inch or smaller. If the seed is planted in the ground, or in a container outside now, that "eye" will only grow to a quarter of an inch in a month from now.

Potatoes need warmth to grow. I know it is tempting to plant now, especially since we have had so many days in the 60's and 70's. But consider the night temperatures. This morning at my place, it was 32 degrees. There is very little, if any growth at all at temperatures below about 45 degrees. If the seed potato has begun to develop roots, it is much less vulnerable to the elements and your success is greater. Colorado has cold nights all the way into May. We still have at least another month of possible snow. The month of April has been known to give us a full week of rain and sometimes more. A week of rain combined with cold night temperatures may cause your seeds to sit in the ground and rot. They are most likely to survive if they have roots.

I have attached a few photos of some of my pre-sprouted seeds. To get to this size usually takes about 4-5 weeks in a warm 70 degree room. No potato tastes better than one dug fresh out of the ground..

