

POTATO TOWER

Materials:

8 Cedar Fence Boards 1" x 6" x 72" (a)
4 Cedar Boards 2" x 2" x 36" (b)
96 Galvanized Deck Screws 1 5/8"

Cut List

(a) 12 pieces 1" x 6" x 24"
(a) 12 pieces 1" x 6" x 23"
(b) 4 pieces 2" x 2" x 33"

Assembly Directions:

On the 24" pieces drill 2 holes at each end 1-1/4" in from the end.

On the 23" pieces drill 2 holes at each end 3/4" in from the end.

Screw 2 pieces of the 23" boards onto 2 pieces of the 2" X 2"s, one at the top and one at the bottom.

See sketch;

The next step requires an extra pair of hands. Hold both frames on end and screw three boards 24" long onto them, one at the top and two at the bottom. Repeat on the other side. This will leave you with an opening for all four sides of the tower approximately three boards wide.

Prepare your soil in the bottom of your tower. Potatoes prefer a soil ph of 5.5 to 6.8 which is slightly acidic. Adding gypsum supplies calcium and does not affect the ph. Avoid using lime as this can cause potato scab. Give them a balanced diet low in nitrogen and potassium. Use plenty of compost and use a balanced liquid fertilizer about every 14 days thru out the summer months. Plant four or 5 small seedling potatoes (use only certified seed potatoes) about the size of an egg with the eyes uppermost, making sure that you have two or three good fat eyes (Too many eyes will produce more stems and will end up with smaller potatoes) in good rich soil. In the bottom 11" plant your seed 6" to 8" deep in your tower. Water gently. As your plants start to grow, wait until they are about 9" above the soil and cover no more than one third of the foliage. Let it grow again and repeat the same step over. Add more of your boards as you go until you reach the top. Remember to water your tower, especially in our summer months of drought. Don't let them dry out!! After the initial soil used in the bottom of your tower, add only very light material. I use my own compost.

Once the plants are flowering you may take some of your new potatoes from the bottom layer for a special treat by removing a couple of boards. Then let the remainder mature for later. Usually when a heavy frost hits the tops and the foliage dies back. Wait at least two weeks or longer to empty your tower completely. It is generally understood in the potato growing world for home gardeners that if you yield 4 pounds for each seed that you plant, you should have no complaints.

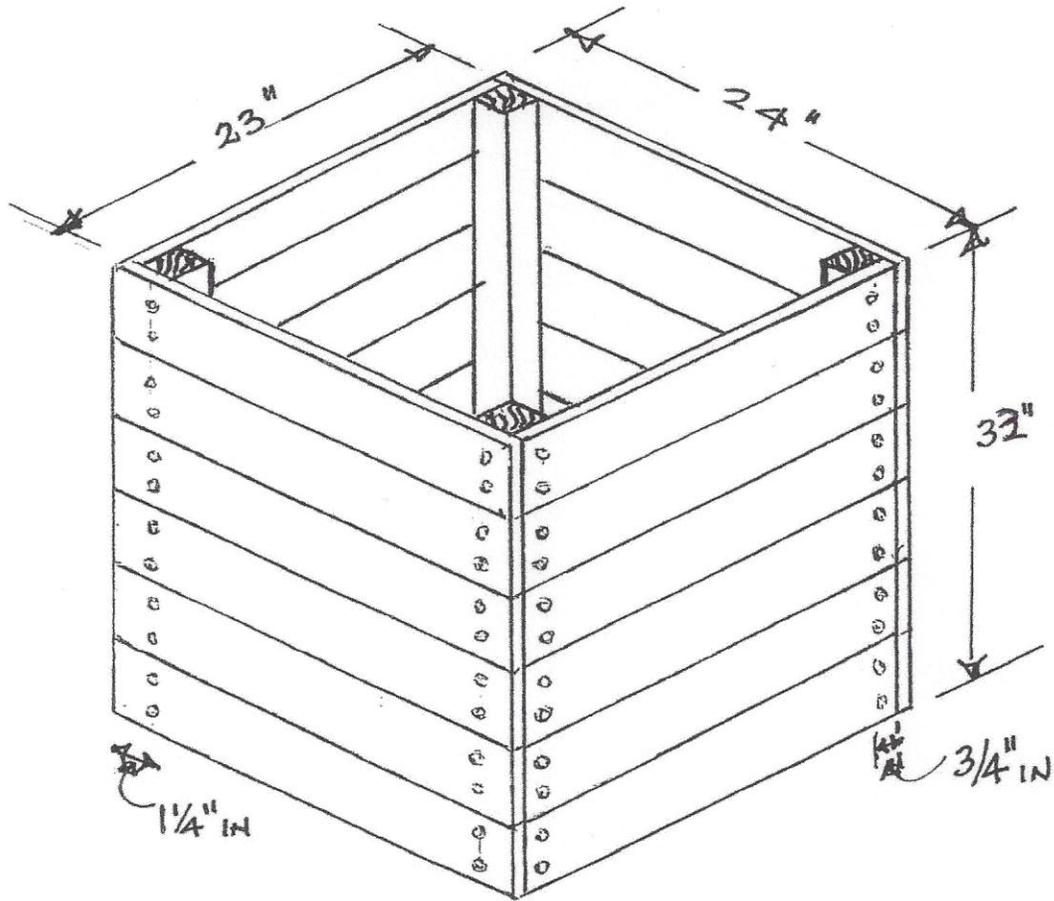
Potato Variety Recommendations

Use potatoes for container growing; such as Red Pontiac, Indian Pit, Yellow Finn, Fingerling types. In 2008, three other varieties were tested with mixed success. White Rose and Russet varieties performed well. Nooksack failed as a container potato, but did very well in an open garden.

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Skill Level: Beginner

Cost: if using cedar, approximately \$25



Prepared by WSU-Pierce County Master Gardener Bill Rigby
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