

SWEET POTATO VINES



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OBJECTIVE(S):

1. Educational Components

Each participant will be presented with a definition of a sweet potato and basic information regarding its growth and maintenance.

2. Activity

Each participant will make (or get help making) a cutting of a sweet potato to sprout in a container.

3. Take Away

Each participant will take a container with a sweet potato cutting back with them to their room.

MATERIALS:

(Plan for 8-10 patients. Eight is supposed to be the maximum, but sometimes we get 10.)

_____ Pens

_____ Markers

_____ Watering cans (2 available in BRI supply cabinet) or individual watering bottles for patient to use

LESSON: SWEET POTATO VINES

MATERIALS *(Continued)*

- _____ Name tags for patients (check BRI supply cabinet)
- _____ Example of completed project you're doing
- _____ An extra set of the patient project materials listed below in order for you to demonstrate the project
- _____ TWO completed presentation forms (1 to BRI and 1 mailed to Ext. office)
- _____ Your clean receipts for materials purchased (give to BRI therapists)

SPECIFIC ITEMS NEEDED for this project

- One sweet potato per group member plus one additional
- One medium wide-mouth canning jar per person
- Toothpicks
- Sharp knife
- Water
- Optional, photos of sweet potatoes, seed catalogs

IS A POWERPOINT OR PREZI OF PRESENTATION AVAILABLE? NO

HANDOUTS: 1) *"Sweet Potato Care"*

2) *"Guaranteed Crispy Sweet Potato Fries & Sriracha Mayo Dip" recipe*

BEFORE CLASS

1. **AT LEAST ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE—MAKE YOUR EXAMPLE.**
2. Consider offering sweet potato chips as a snack—get permission first.
 - **Strongly suggest** that some of the potatoes have the toothpick holes pre-arranged. Prime by hammering a nail into the sweet potatoes before class.
 - Wash potato with water.
 1. Stick 4-5 toothpicks around the circumference of the potato
 2. Hand the potato, thin side down on a clear canning jar without a lid.
 3. Fill the jar with water high enough to cover the bottom of the potato.
 4. Place in a dark area until it sprouts (about 3 weeks)
 5. Bottom half of the potato must remain in water so check it frequently so it does not dry out.
 6. Once it sprouts, place it in direct sun, and keep water at the same level and watch it grow.

DURING CLASS:

1. Wash potato with water.
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DURING CLASS *(Continued)*

4. Fill the jar with water high enough to cover the bottom of the potato.
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MAINTENANCE:

Once the vines grow, the plant can be kept for a long time in the jar. When vines are at least 6-8 inches long, they can be cut off the potato and placed with others in a jar to grow roots. Then pot in containers with annuals for color.

Water only when the soil feels dry to the touch, be sure that excess water drains away from the roots. Don't let the plant sit in a saucer of water.

INFORMATION/DESCRIPTION/FACTS: Also see handout, *"Sweet Potato Care."*

One of the most versatile plants around, the sweet potato vine can be grown in sun or shade and in container gardens, landscapes, or garden beds and borders. The plant is loved for its colorful chartreuse, purple, bronze, copper, or black foliage. And because its beauty comes from the foliage, the sweet potato vine can be enjoyed all season long without worrying about whether it's going to go in and out of bloom.

While it's traditionally used as an accent plant, the sweet potato vine can also be grown as a focal point on its own. Compact varieties are fun in hanging baskets and window boxes; larger varieties are outstanding in large containers or as an annual groundcover.

The plant grows best in moist, well-drained soil; if the ground stays too wet for too long, the sweet potato vine may rot and die. If grown in containers, be sure the pots have drainage to allow excess water to escape.

Typically people don't have to worry about fertilizing sweet potato vine unless they want it to grow faster.

Sweet potatoes aren't started by seed like most other vegetables, they're started from slips. Slips are shoots that are grown from a mature sweet potato. You can order slips from a mail order or Internet catalog or you can start slips from a sweet potato you bought at the store or one from your garden. If you buy a potato from the store, be sure to find out if you're getting a bush type or a vining type. Each sweet potato can produce up to 50 slip sprouts.

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SOURCES

Costa Farms. (n.d.) Sweet potato vine. Retrieved April 22, 2018, from <http://www.costafarms.com/plants/sweet-potato-vine>

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[Karen]. (2017, March 7). Why I'll never grow sweet potatoes this way again. The Art of Doing Stuff. Retrieved April 22, 2018, from <https://www.theartofdoingstuff.com/never-grow-sweet-potato-slips-this-way-again/>

Will, M. (2015, August 15.). How to grow sweet potato vine from cuttings. Empress of Dirt. Retrieved April 22, 2018, from <https://empressofdirt.net/grow-sweet-potato-vine-cuttings/> (Photo)

SWEET POTATO CARE

Sweet potatoes in the U.S. are grown mostly in the South. They are planted in the spring by "slips." These are the small rooted pieces of the vine that grow from the "eyes" or buds of the potato.

The sweet potato produces vine-like stems that resemble the philodendron plant. Place the sweet potato in a container of water. Keep the top 1/3 of the potato exposed by placing toothpicks into the sides. The pointed end should be down in the water. In a few weeks a vine with several stems will begin to sprout. The stems are weak; tie the stems to a stake.

Sweet potatoes like a bright, sunny location and require care like house plants such as ivy.



Fertilize about once a month.

If the sweet potato vine gets too long, cut it back a few inches to force the vine to get bushier. The tip of the vine that was pinched off can be rooted in water or moist soil.

Your sweet potato vines can be planted outside in late May to produce sweet potatoes that can be dug and eaten in the fall.

Guaranteed Crispy Sweet Potato Fries & Sriracha Mayo Dip

Author: The Art of Doing Stuff

Ingredients

- 2 large sweet potatoes
- 1 Tablespoon of cornstarch
- *Dipping Sauce*
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp or more Sriracha sauce

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425 or deep fryer to highest setting
2. Peel sweet potatoes, slice into medium thick slices (closer to thin than thick).
3. Soak potatoes at least 4 hours in water.
4. Drain water from sweet potatoes and shake dry with your hands.
5. Put 1 Tablespoon of cornstarch into food safe plastic bag.
6. Dump sweet potato fries into bag, blow some air into it, and shake bag until fries are coated.
7. Place fries on cookie sheet, drizzle with a couple Tablespoons of olive oil.
8. Toss fries until evenly coated with oil.
9. Arrange on cookie sheet(s) with lots of space in between fries to prevent steaming.
10. Cook in hot oven for 15 minutes then check.
11. The fries will release from the pan when they're ready to flip the same way a steak would.
12. Flip fries, and continue to cook for another 5-10 minutes.
13. (cooking time depends greatly on the quality of your baking sheet so keep an eye on them)
14. Dipping Sauce: Mix together mayo, pepper and Sriracha sauce. Adjust to your taste.