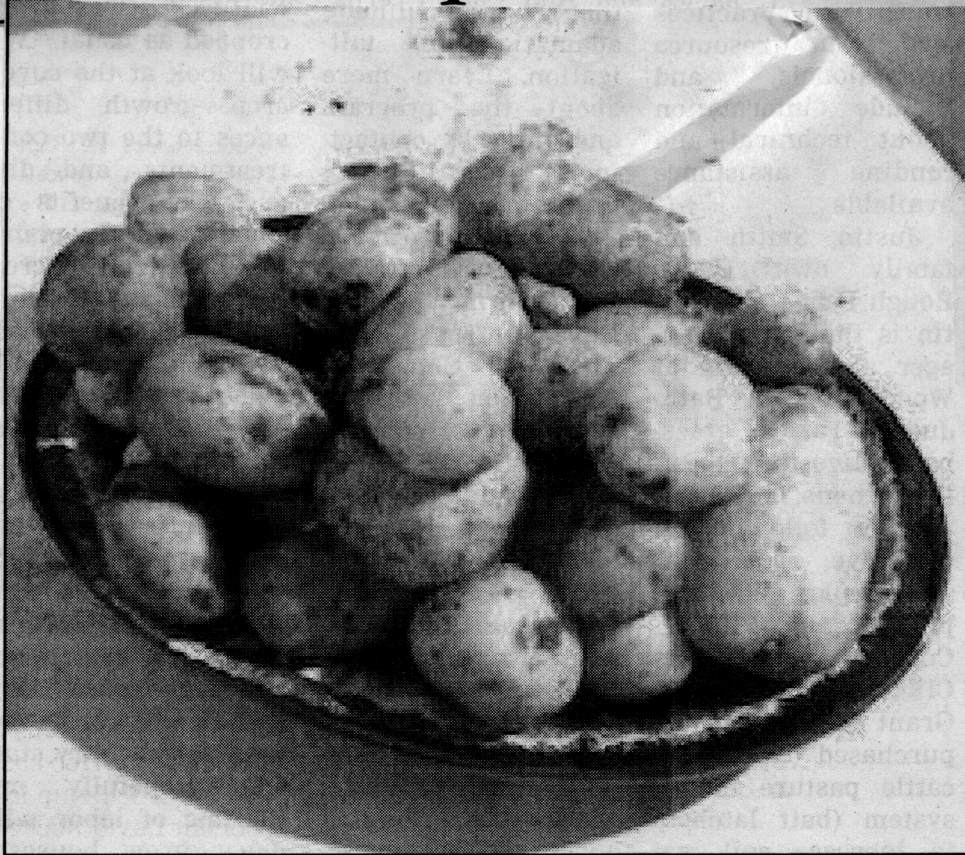


# Live Free and Dig

with the Littleton Garden Club

*Potato power*



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Littleton Garden Club

Potatoes have a certain kind of power. Nutritional power is evident as the vegetable is suitable for so many diet requirements. One medium-sized potato has just 110 calories. It's fat-free and sodium and cholesterol free too.

A medium spud with its skin is a good source of potassium. It ranks highest for potassium content among the top 20 popular raw fruits and vegetables. Also, Vitamin C is found in this tuber. Like many people, I love potatoes even without knowing all those attributes. They are filling due to being carb-rich. They are a winner in many meals.

As a crop, potatoes are generally pretty easy to tackle. Our New Hampshire extension service says locations with at least six to eight hours of direct sunlight a day is preferred. Some folks new to gardening may be dismayed when their previously rich green shoots start to shrivel as fall gets closer. That occurrence

is the potatoe's signal that it's almost harvest time.

For storage potatoes, wait two or three weeks after the foliage has died back to harvest. Handle harvested potatoes gently as they can bruise. Move them to a dry area out of the light to avoid greening. Brush excess dry soil from potatoes but don't wash them until you're ready to use them. Store potatoes in a cool, moist, dark environment such as root cellar or basement.

During a summer-time garden club tour, I discovered a neighbor was growing potatoes in bags. Ed Martin grew up in northern Maine. That is where most of our great regional potatoes originate. He quipped: "I have a bit of potato in my dna!" He seemed eager to have a successful crop.

Because his small lawn area contains many shade trees, he decided that grow bags might be a solution. The bags would offer the flexibility of choosing a proper grow location. He placed the

striking, sturdy black containers on the edge of his very sunny driveway. I was curious about how the special containers would perform.

The bags were purchased online and he planted 3 of the 6 bags received this first year. He bought local seed potatoes to plant. He watered them about every other day until water would run out of the bags. When it was rainy he could ignore that chore. Ed didn't have insect issues and said he learned that adding a little soil to the bags periodically would be helpful.

Ed harvested a total of 10 pounds of potatoes. (See photo of some of his potatoes.) Although he did not get a return on his investment this year, he will be trying five or six bags next season. The grow bags should last two or three seasons if cleaned out properly. I believe it'll prove to be a financial win for Ed in his next growing season with those clean, recycled grow bags.

Besides being a powerful crop that stores well, potatoes can be a literal form of power and a way to teach STEM skills to kids! A battery is created when something makes chemical energy convert into electricity. Potatoes can become batteries, or cells. Certain metals

experience a chemical reaction with the acids inside of potatoes. That reaction creates electrical energy that can power a small device like an LED light or clock. Share that with a child in your life.

Experience potato power!

For more information about our club or our meetings, visit our Web site: <https://www.littletonnhgardenclub.org/>.