



Glasgow's Potato Day

Everyone is Welcome and Entry is Free

With a population of over 500,000 it seemed strange that Glasgow had not had a Potato Day before 2012. With its vibrant atmosphere, Glasgow Potato Day has become *the* event to get everyone excited at the prospect of a new growing season.

Potato Day is organised by Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF) for gardeners across the city and beyond

allotment-holders,
community, school and therapeutic gardeners;
gardeners on balconies, in back-courts and private gardens;
young and old..

GAF welcomes the participation of groups such as Glasgow Local Food Network and Urban Roots in providing the 'Seed Swap Table' and workshops. We offer activities to maintain the interest of young gardeners which include mask and puppet making with The Glasgow Mask & Puppet Theatre and face painting by 'Fab Faces'

**The event is held at the Reidvale Neighbourhood Centre, 13 Whitevale Street, Dennistoun
Glasgow, G31 1QW**

How it Works

The concept of Potato Day is simple – armed with a list, a pencil & some bags, choose as little as just one tuber of any number of the 50 or more varieties of the certified seed potatoes on offer - not forgetting to label each variety - or buy larger bags of single varieties. To be honest it's not about volume, but about variety. The subject of Scotland's favourite veg leads to excited discussion about the best for flavour, mash, boiling and blight resistance!

Our own in-house 'experts' are on hand to assist and give advice.

In addition to the seed potatoes, there are sundries such as potato planter bags and fertilisers, onion and shallot sets and seed garlic for planting. We stock a wide range of vegetable, herb and flower seeds from Kings Seeds. Other stalls include jams and chutneys for sale, T-shirts and our 'Tattie Bash' stand.

After the exertions of selection and attending workshops, a bit of home-baking and a cuppa are provided in the cafe, where the gardening chat can continue of course!

The Tattie Bash

The tattie bash is a fun competition to see who can grow the greatest weight of spuds from one seed potato in a pot and raise money for charity.

For the princely sum of £2, we will give you the seed potato and the pot - you have to get your own compost and grow the plant wherever you can!

Tattie Bash Weigh-ins are usually held at the following allotment open days in August:

Mansewood Allotments G43 1ED

Hamiltonhill Allotments G22 5QN

Kennyhill Allotments G33 2DD

so resist the temptation to eat your crop before it is weighed!

Bring your plant, complete in its pot, (although you can cut the foliage off to make it easier to transport) where it will be tipped out and the potatoes weighed. There will be an option to keep your spuds for yourself or offer them for charity sale.

The prize for the top weight of spuds grown will be £20 Dobbies vouchers.

All proceeds will go to the charity WaterAid who work to provide safe clean water to communities across the world- something we take for granted in our own country!

WaterAid is a global organisations whose aims are:

- To promote and secure poor people's rights and access to safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation.
- To support governments and service providers in developing their capacity to deliver safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation.
- To advocate for the essential role of safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation in human development.
- To further develop as an effective global organisation recognised as a leader in our field and for living our values.

see www.wateraid.org

Some More Details About Our Spuds

So why buy certified seed potatoes?

Each seed potato is a clone of the parent. You can grow a potato from the seeds in the green fruit-like 'potato berries' which form on some plants, but unless selectively cross pollinated, you'll have no idea whether the new plant will be a good-un, or a bad-un and the plant will need to be overwintered and grown on for a season or more before you start getting a worthwhile crop.....So most of us grow from seed potatoes, removed from a plant that does what it says on the tin.

Clones unfortunately gather viruses & other diseases and over time pass on a bit more 'rubbish' to the next generation. Eventually they will die out through disease (10-30 years) and need 'rejuvenation' through breeding programmes. Low grade seed potatoes, those purchased from shops and garden-grown tubers carry considerable numbers of bacterial & fungal pests that are not present in certified high grade seed. The safest control is to grow clean stock and keep your plot clean of disease for everyone's sake.

Scotland is one of the most important producers of seed potatoes in the world and the quality is under the official control of the Scottish Government no less. Strict regulation ensures quality seed free from defects and diseases. Each year, Scottish growers produce some 400,000 tonnes of potatoes. Some 300,000 tonnes is sold, the rest is replanted. The bulk of the crop is sold within the UK, bringing in some £50m, with an additional £9m raised from exports to European Union (EU) countries, according to the Potato Council. A further £21m worth of potatoes is sold beyond the EU. The climate in Scotland means that aphid populations are generally low and that virus diseases are usually not a problem. Because of the geographical situation, they are free from bacterial diseases such as ring rot and brown rot, which not many other world competitors can claim. Gangs of 'rogues' prowl the seed potato fields looking for plants which are not true to form or unhealthy, to ensure quality.

Our seed potatoes at Glasgow Potato Day

Our suppliers are JBA potatoes, based in Annan (halfway between Dumfries & Carlisle), WCF in Perth and SKEA Organics in Auchterhouse, Dundee. All companies use Scottish seed potato growers.

Albert Bartlett potato series

It's said that if you laid out all the vegetables grown by the Albert Bartlett company, the line would stretch three times round the world. Not bad for a firm started in the backroom of a council house in Lanarkshire by three men who could barely read and write. Albert came to Scotland from Northern Ireland in 1947 with sons Alex 16, and Jimmy 22, and with little more than big dreams! Starting with beetroot they developed the 'Scotty' brand. In the 1960s they moved to England, where part of the firm is now based, but they also have a big site in Aidrie. The UK business is supplied by a group of 96 farmers stretching from Cornwall to Inverness and 11 on the island of Jersey. With clever branding and marketing, you'll see many of their potatoes in prime display at various supermarkets. Seed potato is available to gardeners, although it is always in carefully controlled and branded pre-paks. Their mission is 'to make potatoes interesting and consistently interesting'!

'Sarpo' series

Sarvari Trust has its origins in Hungary. During the 1950s Dr Istvan Sárvári headed a team working on blight resistant potatoes. In Soviet times, the USSR needed potatoes that could be grown without chemicals so the Sárváris developed resistance to viruses and then resistance to blight. In the post Soviet era these potatoes were discovered by a group of Scottish potato growers & scientists, who eventually negotiated their marketing and the setting up of the Sarvari Research Trust based in Bangor, North Wales. Money earned still helps to support the work of the family in Hungary. More recently the Sarvari Trust is building a "Crowd" of supporters and researchers who help them with their work. For much more information on this fascinating project see www.sarvari-trust.org.

Why grow Sarpos? Sar-po stands for Sarvari Potato. Why grow any variety? Plot-holders want a good yield of spuds that have a great taste and texture. If you like a dry, floury variety like Kerrs Pink then you should try Sarpo Mira, Axona, Blue Danube or Sarpo Shona. If it's a waxy one you want, then try the early Sarpo Una or early maincrop Sarpo Kifli.

Other good reasons to grow Sarpos? Their vigour means they smother most weeds and leave the plot clean. No nasty sprays or chemicals required to grow a healthy crop. Just be careful to cut the tops when the spuds are the size you want. If left to grow on too long, the huge spuds may have hollow heart. Their long natural dormancy means they can be stored without refrigeration until well into the following year. What more do you want? Some growers in sheltered plots leave their Sarpo spuds in the ground and harvest as they need them over the winter, others like to use Axona or Sarpo Mira as second croppers; just leave some seed in a tray outside and plant them in July to get new potatoes in October and November.