

Potato

Harvesting

The time of harvest is very important in potato. The development of tuber continues till vines die. The main crop is ready for harvest within 75-120 days of planting depending upon the area, soil type and variety sown. In the hills, the crop should be normally harvested when the soil is not very wet. Tubers lifted during the monsoon have a poor keeping quality and also develop various types of rots. The main crop is ready for harvest when majority of the leaves turn yellow-brown. At this stage, the tops are cut near the ground level. The potatoes are dug out from the field by ploughing after 8-10 days. These potatoes are manually picked from the field and stored in shade. Manual harvesting of potatoes is very labour intensive, time consuming and causes lot of damage to the tubers. Various low cost bullock drawn and tractor drawn potato diggers have been developed at CPRI, Shimla which exposes 80% of the tubers and covers 1-3 ha of area per day.

The harvested potatoes are surface dried and kept in heaps for 10-15 days in shade for curing of skin. The tubers should not be exposed to direct sunlight as they become green. All damaged and rotten tubers should be removed. The produce should be kept in a cool place before sending to the market.

Yield

The yield varies from variety to variety. However, the average yield of the early-maturing varieties is about 20 t/ha and that of the late varieties about 30 t/ha.