



Washington State University, June 2025

<https://vegetables.wsu.edu/sweetpotato>

Welcome to the third sweetpotato newsletter of 2025! Hopefully your sweetpotato slips are in the ground or will be soon. Now is the time to be making sure your slips are weed-free, irrigated, and prepared to grow! Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

- Sammi Grieger: [samantha.grieger@wsu.edu](mailto:samantha.grieger@wsu.edu) (Olympic/Kitsap Peninsula)
- Laura Schulz: [laura.schulz@wsu.edu](mailto:laura.schulz@wsu.edu) (Other areas in WA/OR)



*Weeds can reduce yield if not properly controlled in the first 3-6 weeks after transplanting.*

## Weed Management

- The **critical weed free period** to prevent yield loss is the first **3 to 6 weeks after transplanting**; make sure to keep the area around slips free of weeds
- In the future, consider varieties with different canopy types! **Erect or bush-type varieties** are better able to compete with weeds in the row, and they can enable between-row mechanical weed management later into the growing season

## Early Season Tips

Keep your slips well irrigated to set them up for success:

- While sweetpotatoes are considered a drought-tolerant crop, they **need adequate water to become established**

- For the first 3 weeks after planting, **irrigate twice a week**; about 0.5 inches of water at each irrigation event (may vary with soil type)
- Excessive irrigation can cause slips to rot
- **Slip dieback is normal**, so don't be too worried about it! With proper growing conditions, new growth will sprout from your slips, sometimes from below the soil surface. Right now, the slips are focused on growing roots.



*Slips dying back 2 weeks after planting at WSU NWREC. Notice new growth means the slips will be just fine!*

## Sweetpotato Slip Distribution

This year we distributed **4,170 slips** to **66 farms/gardens**, plus **distributed roots** for slip production to **10 farms/gardens** in the Pacific Northwest, spanning **14 counties in Washington** and **2 counties in Oregon!** Thanks so much to everyone participating in our trials, and we look forward to hearing how your sweetpotatoes do throughout the season!



**Note:** *Our sweetpotato research is grant funded, however we did not receive funding to provide slips to others. If you would like to support our project, [consider making a donation to our Horticulture Program](#) at WSU Mount Vernon NWREC. Sweetpotato slips typically cost about \$2 each.*

## Fun Fact!

**Did you know:** Though sweetpotatoes are typically grown as a root crop, the entire plant is edible, including the vines. The vine tips (greens) or leaves alone can be harvested for a healthy and nutritious vegetable. Leaves are very similar to spinach in eating quality, and they hold up in cooking similar to kale. Look out for more information on sweetpotato greens in our next newsletter!

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