



# WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY Sweetpotato Newsletter No. 4: Mid-Season

Washington State University, July 2025

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

Welcome to the fourth sweetpotato newsletter of 2025! This is an update about mid-season growth and more information about sweetpotato greens. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or updates!

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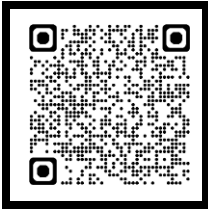


Bunch of sweetpotato greens after harvest (left) and washed and chopped, ready to eat or cook (right).

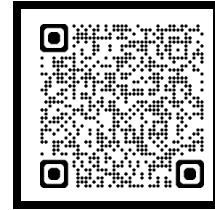
## Sweetpotato Greens

- To harvest, cut 4 to 6 inches of the **vine tip**
- Sweetpotato **vines can be recut** as soon as new tips grow, about every 2 weeks
- Harvesting greens does **decrease root yield** and root size; to reduce the impact on root yield, greens should be harvested minimally or only at the end of the season
- Although harvesting greens has an impact on root yield, the **economic return** can be very good if there is a market for sweetpotato greens (\$3 per bunch in many markets)
- Chop and consume the entire vine tip, including the stems!

- Greens can be **consumed like other leafy greens**: fresh, stir-fried, or steamed
- Sweetpotato greens can be frozen or dried for later use (process like spinach)



Feel free to use our [sweetpotato greens brochure](#) and [recipe cards](#) for marketing!



## Field Maintenance

- Continue to hand weed the planting holes (if you are using plastic mulch) and control weeds between rows
- From mid-July to mid-September, **irrigate plots every week or every other week** to a depth of 15 inches; consistent watering minimizes root splitting
- **Deer and rabbits** can graze the entire plant, leading to crop failure; cover plants with floating row cover or plastic slitted tunnels, or use fencing if deer or rabbits are an issue
- Sweetpotato can tolerate minor leaf damage from insect pests with no impact on root yield; typically, there is **no need to control foliar insect pests**

## What are my plants doing underground?



Hopefully you have started to see some vine growth above ground in the past couple weeks, but it is normal for your plants to still be small. Underground, the plants are forming **pencil roots**, which can become storage roots! Pencil roots can be distinguished from

**fibrous roots** by their color (either orange or purple, depending on the color of the sweetpotato) and their thickness. In the next month, the plants will “decide” which of those pencil roots are lucky enough to become **storage roots** (the rest will remain as pencil roots) and will start sending sugars down to those roots to bulk them up!

## Plant Growth Update!

Thanks to everyone who has sent us photo updates of their sweetpotato plants! Please continue to send us updates, and we will share some photos here so others can see how the trials are going in different places.



Left: Monaco in a garden in Skagit County, Center: Monaco at WSU NWREC in Skagit County, Right: Bayou Belle on a farm in Whatcom County. Photos from July 15-16, 2025.

## Fun Fact!

**Did you know:** Not only are sweetpotato vines tasty for humans, but they can also be fed to livestock! The vines are high in protein, fiber, and other nutrients. [Learn more in our factsheet](#). This is great option at the end of the season when vines are left over after harvesting the sweetpotato roots.

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