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Sweetpotato Newsletter No. 5: Late Season

Washington State University, August 2025

vegetables.wsu.edu/sweetpotato

Welcome to the fifth sweetpotato newsletter of 2025! This is an update about late season growth and more information. Please feel free to contact us with additional questions!

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

Field Maintenance

- From mid-July to mid-September, irrigate sweetpotatoes once every other week to a depth of 15 inches, to reach roots. This may vary slightly depending on soil type.

Plant Growth Update

By this point in the season, sweetpotato plants are typically at their maximum canopy size. Now the plants have switched their focus from growing new leaves to sending sugars from their leaves down into the roots to bulk them up!



Left: A sweetpotato variety trial at WSU NWREC in Mount Vernon, WA on August 22, 2025.

Right: Bayou Belle and Monaco growing on a farm in Whatcom County on August 18, 2025.

Pest Issues

- Foliar pests usually don't cause significant damage, however aphids, whiteflies, and other sucking insects can be vectors for viruses.
- Voles are the most concerning pest as sweetpotato storage roots develop. Check under plastic mulch for their runways. Place mouse traps baited with apple or peanut butter perpendicular to the runways with at least one trap per 100 ft and check them regularly.
- For more information about sweetpotato pests and diseases, see [our growing guide](#).

Fasciation

- Sweetpotatoes are vegetatively propagated, and after several generations genetic mutations can occur. For example, **fasciated** vines, which are flat and wide, appear to be multiple vines fused together. Plant growth and root production appear to be unaffected.



Upcoming Events!



Curing Sweetpotatoes
August 26th, 2025 @ 6pm *Online!*

  

In-person! **3rd Annual Sweetpotato Field Day**
September 5th @ 2pm - 4pm
WSU Mount Vernon Northwest Research and Education Center



  

Curing Workshop

Tuesday, August 26, 6:00 PM
Zoom

[Register for Curing Workshop!](#)



Sweetpotato Field Day

Friday, September 5, 2:00-4:00 PM
WSU NWREC,
16650 WA-536, Mount Vernon

[Register for field day!](#)



Fun Fact!

Did you know: In 1953, the orange-flesh sweetpotato cultivar ‘Porto Rico’ was introduced in the Southeast U.S. ‘Yam’ was used in an extensive marketing campaign to contrast the new orange-flesh color from the traditional cream-flesh cultivars grown historically in the U.S. Though yams are a completely different crop (family Dioscoreaceae, genus Dioscorea) from sweetpotato (family Convolvulaceae, genus Ipomoea), the term ‘yam’ is now frequently used for sweetpotatoes in the U.S, though the Department of Agriculture requires proper botanical labeling on market signs and packaging.

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