



## Mile of Potatoes Project

### Help Sheet 3 – Harvesting and Storing

#### Harvest Festival!

Harvest is the time to discover the fruits of your labour (or vegetables in this case!) and can be very exciting indeed. Your first early potatoes will be ready to harvest between 8 and 12 weeks from when you planted them. These are your 'new potatoes' which just need to be cleaned then boiled or steamed for a special treat at the start of summer. Second earlies will be ready 3-5 weeks later. Maincrop potatoes will be ready for harvest from the start of September onwards.



Dig all potatoes up from the side of the ridge to avoid damaging them. The foliage can be placed on the compost heap only if it is completely free from disease - if not, burn it. If you don't need all the potatoes from a plant at one time simply burrow around the roots with your hands and remove the potatoes you need. The remaining spuds will continue to grow. Remove any soil clinging to the potatoes and lay them on top of mother earth for a few hours to dry out - if they are stored damp, they will rot. Leaving them on the soil surface in the sun will harden the skin slightly, doubling the storage time - this is especially important for maincrop potatoes.

#### Storing Your Spuds

The best way to store your potatoes is in hessian sacks that you can buy from many of the seed suppliers. Alternatives are paper sacks, boxes or even old pillow cases. Don't, however, store potatoes in plastic bags or containers. You need to exclude light or your potatoes will turn green, but allow them to breathe and moisture to evaporate. The ideal storage condition is at 5°C - a cool dark shed or garage is often the best place.



**Waste Not, Want Not...**remember to put your potato peelings on the compost for next year's crop.