



SWEET POTATO

Botanical facts

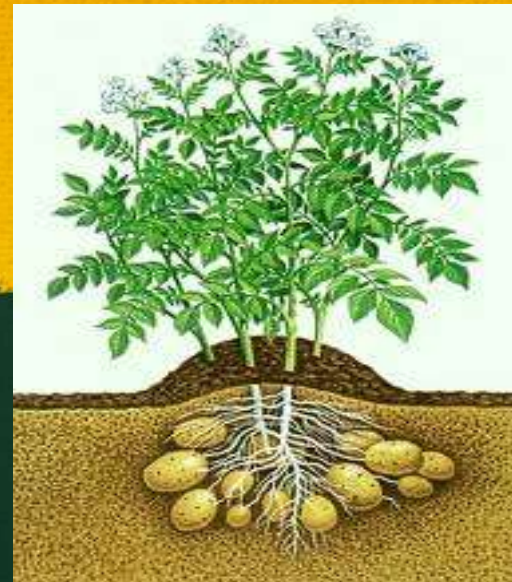
- Kingdom: Plantae
- Order: Solanales
- Family: Convolvulaceae
- Genus: *Ipomoea*
- Species: *I. batatas*

The center of origin of sweet potatoes was between the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and the Mouth of the Orinoco River in Venezuela.



Growing conditions of Impomeabatatas

Sweet potatoes prefer more tropical climates with soil temperatures above 15C and air temperature ranges between 15C-22C. The preferred growing season is 120 days or shorter and seldom being longer than 135 days. Sweet potatoes grow in a wide variety of soil, with sandy loam or loamy sand being favored.





Cuttings should be taken at least two inches above the soil; using “clean” cuttings (instead of rooted cuttings) helps guard against the spread of diseases from the seeding bed to the field. These rootless cuttings will develop roots quickly when planted four or five inches deep in warm soil. Growers often continue taking cuttings and transplanting them to the fields throughout April, May and June. Plants are planted a foot apart in the fields, with rows being constructed on slightly raised beds about three to four feet apart.

Harvesting

In less developed areas harvest is done by hand.

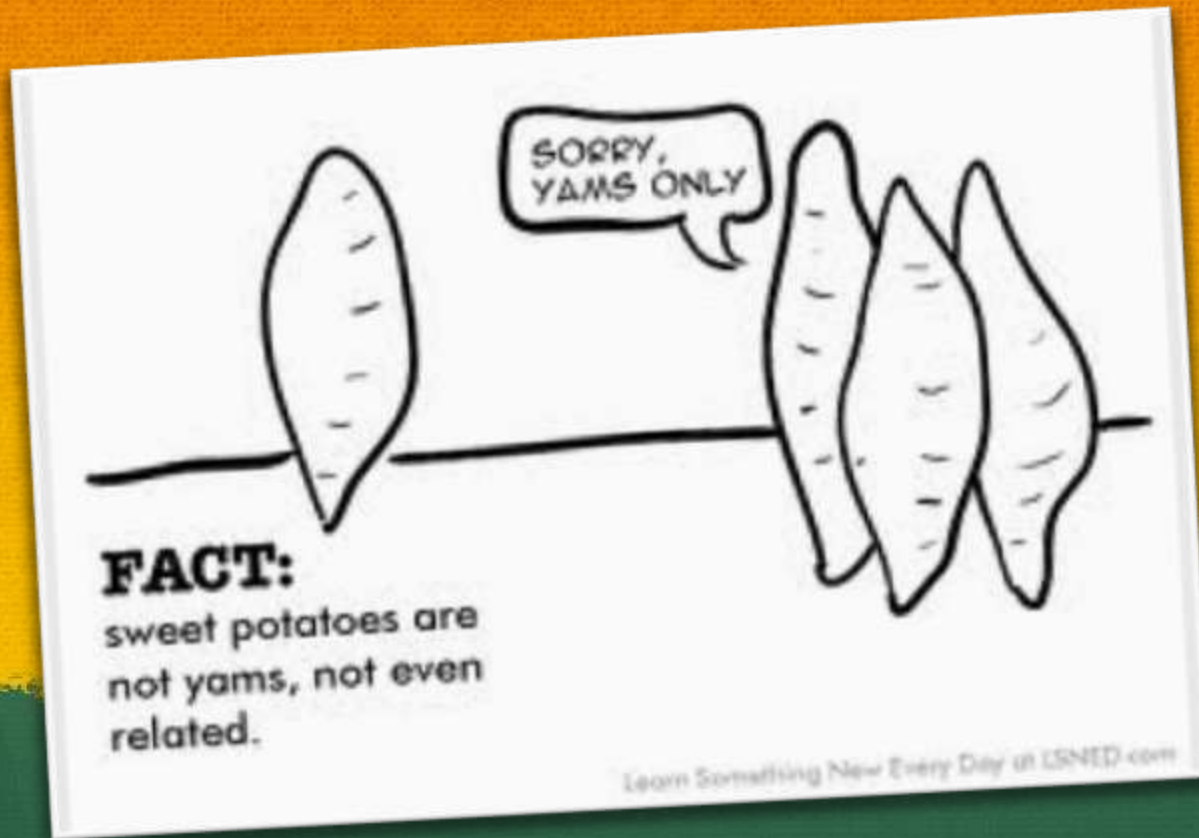


Commercial harvesting is aided by plows.





Sweet potatoes are an amazingly nutritious vegetable. A medium-sized sweet potato is virtually fat free, cholesterol free, sodium free and provides more than the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of vitamin A, along with high levels of protein, fiber, complex carbohydrates, vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin B6, folic acid, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, copper, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and beta carotene.



Although yams and sweet potatoes are both angiosperms (flowering plants), they are not related botanically. Yams are a monocot (a plant having one embryonic seed leaf) and from the Dioscoreaceae or Yam family. Sweet Potatoes, often called 'yams', are a dicot (a plant having two embryonic seed leaves) and are from the Convolvulacea or morning glory family.

References

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