



**TAEWA MĀORI**  
**(Māori potatoes)**  
*Solanum tuberosum*  
**PRODUCTION NOTES FOR SEED TUBERS**

### **SEED (TUBERS)**

There are many varieties of taewa, with each having their own distinctive appearance and uses. Seed tubers should be saved from the current season's crop and generally be between 40 – 65 grams in size. Prior to planting they need to be warmed outdoors in the sun for several days.

### **PLANTING (same as for maincrop)**

- Every 3 years the crop should be rotated to another plot to prevent disease carry-over.
- Cultivate the seedbed so a fine texture is achieved.
- Prefers soil pH 5.0 – 6.0
- Apply pre-emergence herbicide if preferred.
- Apply N:P:K fertiliser (75:40:45 for main crops) as a base dressing at planting.
- Plant late October – early November after frosts and soil temperatures increase (14°C minimum).
- Requires 900 kg/ha of seed if 30grams; 50g seed requires 1500 kg/ha.
- Spacing between rows should be 1 metre: between plants in the row = 30cm.
- Tubers should be planted at a depth of 75 – 100mm.
- Mound/mould once planted.
- Mound/mould 1 or 2 more times during the season to protect from sun and wind.
- Keep weeded.

### **CROP MANAGEMENT**

- A side dressing of fertiliser (Nitrogen 40 kg/ha maximum) can be applied prior to the final mounding (nitrogen products can be blood, urea, seaweed concentrates and others).
- Weed either by hand or with herbicides (mounding helps with weed control).
- Pest control – primarily potato psyllid, aphids, looper caterpillar, wireworm, potato tuber moth, slugs and snails.
- Disease control – watch for late blight, early blight, powdery scab and common scab. In storage, tubers are susceptible to some rots and gangrene.

### **HARVEST FOR SEED**

For seed, choose tubers of good colour and shape (40 – 65g/ golfball size). Do not save damaged, unsightly, or imperfect tubers as seed for the next season. The main criterion is to let the seed mature or harden up in the skin for storage. There are two approaches generally taken:

1. Once the crop and tubers are the right size (generally circa 100days after planting) you can cut the tops off the plants, spray the cut stems with a fungicide (a copper product is best) and let the tubers harden in the ground before harvesting and storage.
2. Let the crop go full term (i.e., the tops dry off naturally and the skins firm up) and grade out seed from the harvest hoping there will be enough for the next season. Taewa need to be harvested before the ground gets too wet (say May) so they don't get any storage rots. If the ground is a well-drained sandy soil, then they can ground store for longer.

### **STORAGE OF SEED TUBERS**

To store the seed, let them dry/harden (cure) fully over a few days and then put in a cool dark place. For small amounts, put in a sack and in the shed/cupboard for the winter. For larger amounts, pack seed into a dry container (not plastic) and put in a cool store at between 1-5°C. When you are ready to plant next season, take the seed out of storage 10-14 days earlier and warm up under trees so they will shoot sooner and at the same time. Seed tubers can be treated with a fungicide prior to storage as an insurance against rots (ask your local horticultural supplier).