

LEARNING TO GROW FOOD 2025

Competition for pre-school settings and primary schools
Sponsored by Midcounties Coop and Farlow Farm Nursery

Competition brief: One potato, two potato, three potato, four!

There are three main objectives for this year's competition:

- to develop the concept of **seed varieties** for a fruit or vegetable
- to develop the skills of **fair comparison** - comparing one variety of potatoes with other varieties in a fair way
- to develop vocabulary and mathematical skills.

What will you grow?

The focus this year will be on developing the children's understanding and knowledge of the concept of varieties of seeds and tubers, using potatoes as an example.

The aim is to provide experience of growing potato tubers so the children to begin to understand that different varieties of seed potatoes will produce potatoes with different characteristics, for example:

- whether they vary in how easy or difficult they are to grow
- whether they develop diseases when growing, such as potato blight or insect infestations
- whether they all yield differing or similar amounts of new potatoes
- whether the potatoes are easy or difficult to prepare for cooking
- how well they respond to different cooking methods
- whether they vary from each other in terms of colour, taste and texture.

What we will deliver to you in the week beginning 24 February?

- four **seed potato tubers** to grow from each of four different varieties - Red Duke of York, Casablanca, Swift and Winston. They are all termed 'first earlies', which means their crops are called 'new potatoes' that are small, sweet and delicious! They are faster growing and ready to harvest in as little as 12 weeks, usually around midsummer, so your crops will be ready for judging when we visit you in early July. The plants take up less space, so they are useful for small gardens or can be grown in containers.

- two bags of **peat-free compost** per entry, very kindly donated by Farlow farm Nursery

- **labels** so the different varieties can be clearly identified.

How will they be grown?

The tubers can be grown:

- in large pots, so some of those provided in previous years will be suitable but must be a minimum of 5 litres to give room for the tubers to grow
- or any **redundant containers** you have (like the ones we had been using for recycling our rubbish), so long as you make drainage holes to let the water out
- or **old compost bags**, rolled over at the top so you can reach the bottom, again making drainage holes
- or **in the ground**.

You can mix and match where you grow them if you'd like to. If you struggle to find suitable containers, let us know and we'll ask our members in Cleobury Gardeners to help out!

How to know what to do?

Our website - www.cleoburygardeners.co.uk - is your main source of information for the growing part of this competition.

- Look for the tab *News, Articles and Resources* and the section on *Gardening Guidelines - Month-by-Month*
- Look specifically at the jobs for **FEBRUARY**. Scroll down until you find the tasks under the heading *Juniors' Jobs for February*. This gives you information on how to chit and plant tubers and, of course, we're always at the end of a telephone or send us an email if you want any advice or support!

The competition will enable you to incorporate many of the aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the science aspects of the National Curriculum as well as, for all children, the development of their vocabulary as they assess the colour, taste and texture of the potatoes and their mathematical skills associated with measuring yields, calculating wastage of the potatoes during preparation and the relative costs involved in purchasing particular varieties of tubers compared with the more general types of potatoes sold in food shops. We shall also provide support materials on sensory testing of foods (taste, texture, aroma and so on) as the project progresses.

How to record progress?

From the outset, the children should keep a log of their activities, either individually or as a group. They can use information technology, writing, oral work, photography and any other recording and communication methods they wish. The log should contain as much evidence of children's activities as feasible, either as individuals or in working groups, to show how the activity has developed their knowledge, skills and understanding, for example through:

- keeping on trying if they encounter difficulties, creating and developing their own ideas and developing strategies for doing things;
- asking simple questions and recognising that they can be answered in different ways;
- observing closely; carrying out simple tests; -
- using their observations and ideas to suggest answers to questions and gathering and recording data to help in answering questions;
- exploring other different varieties of potatoes available, the range of culinary uses they can be put to, and whether can be eaten as part of a healthy diet;
- for older children, recording findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, keys, bar charts, tables and information technology.

They can decide how to present their log and what to put in it to show: the key events; any growing problems and how they solved them; any advice they sought; how the growing conditions influenced their crops; and their overall successes and failures.

When is judging?

Judging will take place week beginning 7 July when the judges will visit, look at the logs and discuss the activities with the children who have taken part. We shall focus on four key aspects that arise from the brief, taking account of the children's ages and abilities:

- developing knowledge and understanding
- applying knowledge and understanding
- recording and evaluating
- preparing, cooking and eating

Support

Practical support and advice will be provided as required. Queries and questions can be emailed to flo.hadley@btinternet.com who will ensure help is provided. Further guidance will be provided after Easter with examples of key points to be covered within each of the four key aspects to clarify what the judges will be considering when making their decisions.