

Double S: Harvesting and Storing Your Sweetpotato Crop

Harvest management

First, if sweet potatoes did not cure in the field before harvest, a farmer should cover the heaps of fresh harvested roots with vines in shade for 3 days before storage. Handle sweet potatoes gently during harvest without leaving them uncovered in the sun and store in stepped pit outside or in same box inside.

For stepped pit, choose shade area on high leveled ground which is away from animals and garbage pits. Gather 2 straight poles of 100cm height, 6 poles of 80cm and 8 poles of 2m long each and thatching grass to cover roof.

Similarly, dig pit 25cm deep, 25cm more with 100cm wide from first step of bottom of pit and also another 25cm depth by 50cm wide at the bottom of pit and let it stay for a few days before adding sweet potatoes. Construct slanted roof of 1m high in front and 80cm high at the back slopping the roof in the direction of wind and select roots for storage that are undamaged, cured and cooled in shade.

Furthermore, collect 35 buckets full of medium sand, dry sand well and cool it for days before using because moist sand makes roots to sprout and rot. Put 5cm layer of cool dry sand at bottom of pit and put sweet potatoes on it with each not touching another and cover with 5cm layer of sand and repeat with another layer of roots and sand as well and repeat the process until you reach to top of pit.

Equally, one can also use a hut made of dry mud brick walls built inside with a door to keep animals out. As one makes sure the hut has good ventilation, wall of house will be one side of box or built in the corner.

Build box of 1m wide using mud bricks and walls and 50cm long with 75cm height and 15cm thick. Let box completely dry and then fill the sand box with potatoes.

Monitor heat of sand box every 2 weeks and if the box feels warm or there is bad smell, unpack immediately and remove infested root.

Finally, remove any sprouts and re pack roots as before.