



[Storage in Sand and Sprouting] provides planting material from storage roots in areas with a long dry season

In such areas, farmers often obtain sweetpotato planting material from roots which have been overlooked during harvest and sprout when it rains. However:

1. The roots sprout only when it rains and planting material only becomes available some weeks afterwards
2. The roots may sprout in distant fields, unprotected from grazing animals and thieves.

To solve these problems, researchers and farmers have developed a system of conserving planting material whereby storage roots are stored in sand and then planted out and watered before the arrival of the rains. This way, they have sprouted and produced large amounts of planting material in time for the arrival of the rains.

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SWEETPOTATO Planting Material

Storage Sand Sprouting



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1

At the end of the rainy season, farmers get small to medium-sized sweetpotato storage roots, **carefully selecting roots that are from healthy plants and are undamaged**, particularly free from weevil damage.



2

The roots are kept in dry sand [swept from around the house or a road] in a container until 6 – 8 wks from the expected start of the rains.



The Sand covers the roots [by about 5cms]

Take care that the sand is cool [not hot from having been in the sun]. Maybe two or more layers of roots can be kept in the same container.



3

The container of sand and roots is **kept in a cool dry, place**, until about 6 – 8 wks before the start of the rains, perhaps in the house or in a roofed hut, but safe from the children or chickens that may like to nest in it.

The roots sprout but generally the sprouts remain quite short. [If the dry season is very long, it may be necessary to remove the sprouts midway during the dry season and allow them to re-grow].



4

About 6 – 8wks before the start of the rains, the sprouting roots are planted in a garden near the home. The whole of the root and sprouts are buried, unless they are very long. They are planted at ~0.5 x 0.5m and in a slight depression [to help with watering]. The soil needs to be fertile and the area fenced against grazing animals. The roots are watered at planting and then every 3 or 4 days.



5

By the time the rains come, the roots will have sprouted vigorously and it is possible to cut large amounts of planting material.

Just 40 roots can generate about 1,500 cuttings