

SEEDS

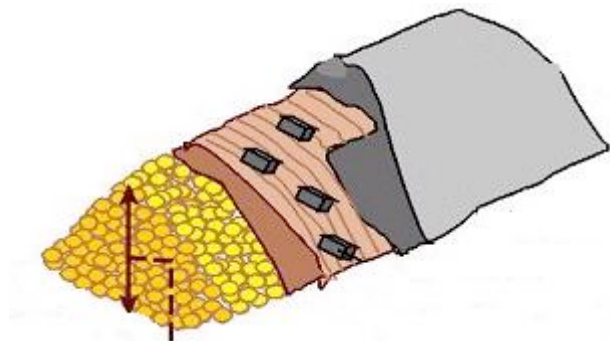
Socio-Economic & Environmental Development Solutions

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Potatoe Storage-Potatoe Clamp

If you are to have home grown **potatoes** all year around then you need to have a way of storing them when you have a glut so that they keep until the months when potatoes cannot be grown. As long as potatoes are kept in a cool, dark, and frost free environment, they will keep for many months. The ideal solution for both garden and **allotment** growers is the **potato clamp**.

Potato Clamp



The basis for a **potato clamp** is a shallow hole dug in the ground from which the potatoes came with its base firmed down. The hole should be around **10-20cm (3.94-7.88 inches) deep** with an area which depends on the volume of potatoes to be stored. The potatoes should be left exposed to the air for around one hour to **dry** and for the skins to thicken.

The hole should then be filled with **straw** with the potatoes piled up in a pyramid/cone on top of the straw. A good 20cm (7.88 inches) gap should be left between the side of the hole and the potatoes, and the pile of potatoes should be no more than 50cm tall at its highest point. Then a further 15cm(5.90 inches) deep layer of straw should be placed over the potatoes

Finally a 15cm (5.90 inches) deep layer of soil should be piled on top of the straw, with a 15cm wide *chimney* hole left in the centre of the top of the clamp for **ventilation**. This ventilation hole should be filled with straw. This soil will come from a spade-depth trench dug around the clamp which keeps hungry animals at bay.

In climates where a hard **frost** is to be expected, a thicker layer of soil should be added to the top of the clamp as insulation. Where frost is unlikely, a shallower depth of soil can be used to prevent the potatoes from getting too warm.

If built correctly, a **potato clamp** will keep late harvested potatoes until the spring, just in time for the crop of **new potatoes** to be harvested. The potato **tubers** stay alive, and the ventilated clamp provide fresh air for respiration, and prevents the **damp** conditions which can lead to rotting. By the New Year, some potatoes will have started to sprout. Just rub these sprouts off before cooking the potatoes.