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McFall

ENG-155

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### Growing Potatoes

For the past several years I have enjoyed gardening, and growing vegetables in the spring and summer time. I have grown tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, cantaloupes, squash, and watermelons. This year I tried something different; I am growing potatoes for the first time. The potatoes I planted are not your regular potatoes; they are purple. Unlike other things I have grown potatoes grow underground, however I did not grow mine underground. I am growing the potatoes in dirt above ground in tires.

The first thing I did was I went to Lowes and bought the potato spuds and soil. After I got the potatoes and soil, I went to Belton Tire and got some old scrap tires for free. Then after I got the tires I had to determine where in the yard to grow them, so I found a good place with adequate sunlight. Next, I placed the first tire on the ground, and filled it about halfway with soil. Then I placed five potato spuds in a “X” shape inside the tire. Once the potatoes were placed in the tire, I finished filling up the tire with soil. After that I watered them, and waited for them to grow.

During the next seven to ten days I continued to water them with no change; then the potatoes finally began to sprout. After the potatoes sprouted, I waited for them to grow as I continued to water them daily. I waited over the next several days as they continued to grow and until the sprouts were about four to six inches tall. I then placed a second tire on top of the first tire. Then I covered the potato sprouts with soil again, and waited. Over the next couple of weeks

I continued to water the potatoes, and waited for them to sprout above the second tire. Within another week to ten days they began to sprout above the second tire. Once they sprouted above the second tire I placed the third, and final, tire on the stack. After they got bigger I did not place any more tires on the stack. Some branches were about five to six feet long, and still growing.

I only used three tires because that's all I had, but I believe I could have used more. If I decide to grow them next season I will pick up a couple more old scrap tires to make the stack taller. The limbs are now long and well above the tires. I continue to water them 3 to 4 times a week as needed. After some time I noticed that some of the leaves seemed to have been eaten by some kind of bug or insect. So then I went to Lowes and bought some 7dust to sprinkle around the tires and on the leaves. So far it seems to be working, I haven't noticed the leaves being eaten up in the past few weeks.

According to the package, potatoes should be harvested, or dug up after the first frost. I expect it to be around the end of October or the first of November. Until then all I should have to do is water them as needed and monitor them for bugs or insects. That should be easy for me to do because most of the other crops I've grown this season are already harvested.

From this point on is purely speculation, but this is what I expect to happen. After the first frost comes I will cut all the branches off and discard them. Then I will remove one tire at time sifting through the soil looking for the potatoes. As I empty the tires I will stack them beside the house to use again next year. I'm not sure how many potatoes that I will harvest from the five spuds that I planted. My hope is that I yield enough potatoes for my mother to make me some purple potato salad. Umm... Good!!!