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DOMINION OF CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

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DIGGING AND STORING OF POTATOES.

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The best time to dig potatoes, if they are not affected with late blight or rot, is as soon as the tops have died. If the weather is dry or where the tops remain green until killed by frost, the digging should be delayed until that time, as during September there is often a great development of tubers. Where potatoes are grown on the average farm the digging is usually left as a matter of convenience until after the corn is harvested, where that crop is grown, as, when the tubers are covered with soil, the latter may be frozen an inch or so in depth, without the crop being injured. Potatoes should not, however, be left in the ground when there is danger of the ground freezing to a greater depth. When the soil is fairly well drained and not particularly wet the digging may be delayed for a month or more without much injury to the crop if the tubers are healthy; however, where there is no disease the sooner the potatoes are dug, after the tops are dead, the better.

Potatoes which have been killed by late blight will usually rot as soon as the conditions are favourable, and for this reason it is better to leave a diseased crop in the ground as long as possible, as the tubers which are diseased will, most of them, show signs of rot before they have to be taken up on account of frost, and they need not be gathered. If diseased potatoes are dug and stored as soon as the tops are dead, the disease will be almost certain to develop in the pit or cellar, and healthy tubers will rot from contact with the diseased ones. It is not good practice to dig diseased potatoes early and pile them in the field. It is better to delay digging as long as possible and then put the potatoes in a cool, well-ventilated cellar where the disease may be checked. Potatoes in wet soil should be dug sooner than those in that which is drier and well drained.

Potatoes should be dug in dry weather, so that when they are taken to the cellar or store-room they will be perfectly dry. If the tubers are housed when wet, the conditions become very favourable for the development of any disease which may affect them and for the rotting of the healthy potatoes from contact with those thus affected.