

Cutting Seed Potatoes

By E. V. Haydenburg, Potato Specialist, Cornell University

With the possible exception of fertilizer tests and other phases of potato production has received so much experimental attention as the question of type of seed piece.

Large versus Small Seed Pieces
Probably, the easiest, most interesting and most frequently conducted seed potato experiment is that testing the influence of size of seed piece on yield.

Large versus Small Whole Tubers for Seed.

Three factors are principally concerned with the size of tuber which is used by a given grower or a given locality namely:

- (1) prevailing cost of seed;
(2) prevailing standard of quality in the mind of the grower;
(3) type of seed stock available.

Whole versus Cut Seed
The question of whether or not to cut seed potatoes depends upon three factors, namely:

- (1) cost of labor;
(2) cost of seed and
(3) the relative yield from whole versus cut seed.

Interval Between Cutting and Planting

In general seed potatoes are cut only a day or two before planting. This is by all means to be advised.

Number of Eyes

Many of our older and experienced potato growers stress the importance of cutting seed pieces to a certain number of eyes. The so called proper number may be one, two or three depending on the personal taste of the grower.

Tennessee Experiment Station tested the comparative yields from whole seed and from an equal weight of half tubers taken from the same lot of seed.

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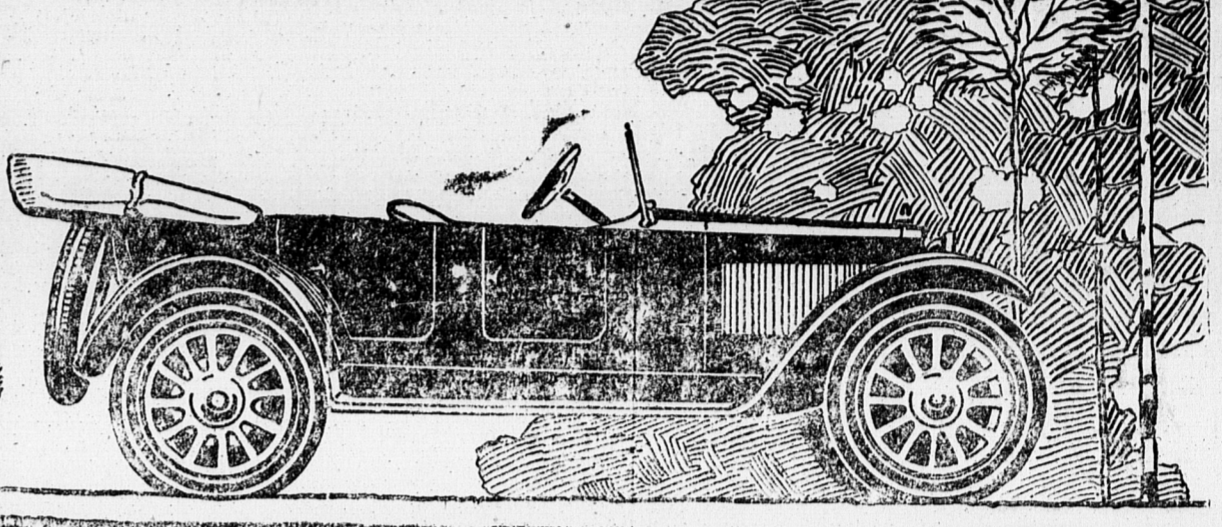
Whipple, of Montana, thinned stands of potatoes planted to two ounce pieces to one stalk per hill in order to test whether the marketable yield might be increased thereby.

Most experiments testing the influence of number of eyes on yield have, in reality, also been tests of the influence of size of seed piece.

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