***Exercise***

1. *What are seed potatoes, and why should you use them instead of regular potatoes?*
2. *Why is it important to let seed potatoes sprout before planting them? How long should the shoots be before planting?*
3. *How does adding compost to the soil help potatoes grow better?*
4. *Where should you store your seed potatoes to sprout, and why is that location ideal?*
5. *How deep should you dig the trench when planting potatoes, and how far apart should they be placed?*
6. *Why is it important to cover the planted potatoes with at least 5cm of soil?*
7. *What is the purpose of covering potatoes with soil as they grow, and how tall should the mound be by the end?*
8. *Why should you use insect-proof netting on your potato plants, and which pest is it protecting them from?*
9. *How often should you mound the soil around your potato plants, and how much of the plant's stem should be left exposed?*
10. *What is the best way to water potatoes to avoid disease, and why is this method important?*
11. *How can you tell if your potatoes are ready to be harvested?*
12. *What tools can you use to harvest potatoes, and why is it important to be careful when removing them from the soil?*
13. *What should you do with the top growth of the potato plant after harvesting?*
14. *How does working the top growth into the soil help your garden?*

**Answers**

1. *What are seed potatoes, and why should you use them instead of regular potatoes?*

Seed potatoes are certified disease-free tubers that are specifically used for planting. You should use them instead of regular potatoes because they are free from diseases that could harm your crop.

1. *Why is it important to let seed potatoes sprout before planting them? How long should the* shoots be before planting?

Allowing seed potatoes to sprout before planting gives them a head start for growth. The shoots should be about 2cm long before planting.

1. *How does adding compost to the soil help potatoes grow better?*

Adding compost improves soil structure, making it looser and easier to work with. It also adds nutrients that help the potatoes grow stronger and healthier.

1. *Where should you store your seed potatoes to sprout, and why is that location ideal?*

Seed potatoes should be stored in a light, dry place like a garage bench or garden shed. This location is ideal because it helps them sprout without being exposed to too much moisture or darkness.

1. *How deep should you dig the trench when planting potatoes, and how far apart should they* *be placed?*

The trench should be about 15cm deep, and the potatoes should be placed 40cm apart in the trench.

1. *Why is it important to cover the planted potatoes with at least 5cm of soil?*

Covering the potatoes with soil helps protect them and encourages healthy growth while preventing frost damage.

1. *What is the purpose of covering potatoes with soil as they grow, and how tall should the mound be by the end?*

As the potatoes grow, covering them with soil encourages the plant to produce more potatoes along the stems. By the end, the mound should be about 15-20cm tall.

1. *Why should you use insect-proof netting on your potato plants, and which pest is it protecting them from?*

The netting helps protect the potatoes from the potato-tomato psyllid, a small insect that can cause damage to the plants.

1. *How often should you mound the soil around your potato plants, and how much of the plant's stem should be left exposed?*

You should mound the soil around your potatoes once a month. Leave about 5cm of the plant's stem exposed above the soil.

1. What is the best way to water potatoes to avoid disease, and why is this method important?

It is important not to overwater the potatoes, as too much watering can promote disease. Natural rainfall is usually sufficient, and it prevents the plants from getting too wet at the top, which can lead to rot.

1. *How can you tell if your potatoes are ready to be harvested?*

You can tell if your potatoes are ready by digging up a few to check their size. If they are small, cover them again and leave them to mature further.

1. *What tools can you use to harvest potatoes, and why is it important to be careful when removing them from the soil?*

Use a fork to loosen the soil around the potatoes. It is important to be careful not to break the shoots connecting the potatoes to the plant, as this can damage the tubers.

1. *What should you do with the top growth of the potato plant after harvesting?*

After harvesting, dig the top growth back into the soil to return nutrients to the soil and improve its structure.

1. *How does working the top growth into the soil help your garden?*

The top growth contains nutrients that improve soil health. Mixing it into the soil helps add organic matter, which makes the soil better for future planting.