

Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station

S. H. STARR, Director

Tifton, Georgia

February 1932

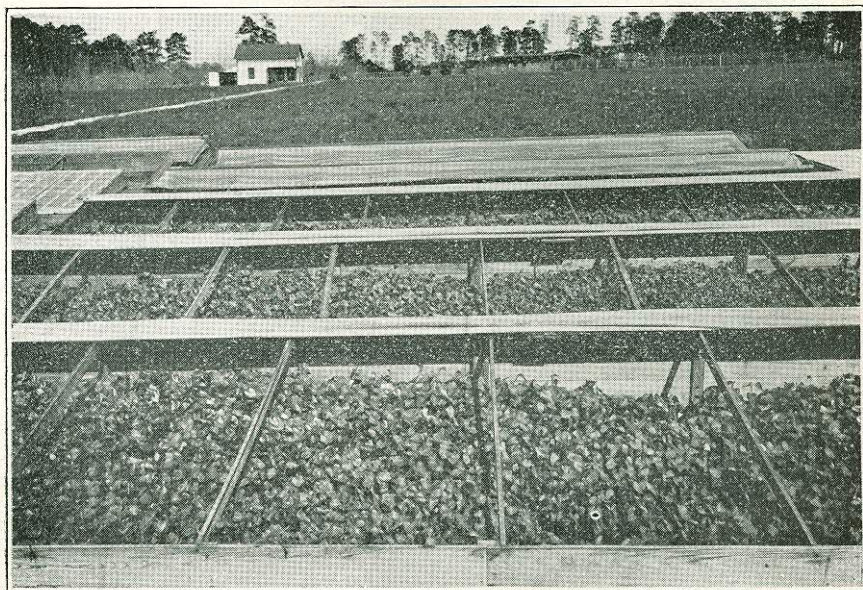
Bulletin No. 17

Sweet Potato Culture in the Coastal Plain of Georgia

(This Bulletin Supersedes Circular No. 4)

By

OTIS WOODARD, Horticulturist



CONTENTS

	Page
Importance of the Crop	3
Adaptation	3
Soil Types	5
Crop Rotation	5
Preparation of the Land	5
Sweet Potato Varieties	
Early Production of Sweet Potato Varieties	6
Late Maturity of Sweet Potato Varieties	9
The Influence of Northern and Southern Grown Seed Potatoes on Yields in the South	10
Selection of Sweet Potatoes for Seed	13
Sources of Sweet Potato Plants	
Comparative Yields of Vines, Draws and Whole Potatoes	14
Comparative Yields from Vine Parts	15
The Influence of the Tip and Stem Ends of Sweet Potatoes on Color and Productivity	15
Production of Sweet Potato Plants	16
Quantity of Seed Potatoes Required	16
Size of Bed	17
Location of Bed	17
Source of Heat for Plant Bed	17
Plant Bed Construction	17
Covering for Plant Bed	19
Manure for Plant Bed	20
Soil for Plant Bed	20
Seed Potato Treatment	20
Bedding Seed Potatoes	21
Plant Bed Management	21
Fertilizer Requirements	22
Triangle Fertilizer Method	22
Fertilizer Formula Test	23
High Analyses Fertilizers	24
The Effect of Varying Amounts of Fertilizer on Early Production	26
The Effect of Rates of Applying Fertilizer on Late Maturity	27
Sources of Ammonia	30
Sources of Potash	31
Miscellaneous Plant Nutrients	32
Spacing Test (Drill)	32
Cost Estimates and Net Returns from Sweet Potato Spacings	34
Spacing Test (Rows)	35
Setting Plants in the Field	37
The Effect of Planting Dates on Early Production	37
The Effect of Planting Dates on Late Maturity	38
Cultural Methods	39
Cultivation	40
The Effect of Vine Pruning on Yields	41
Harvesting for the Early Market	42
Harvesting the Late Crop	42
Grading	44
Grade Requirements	45
Storage	45
Storage Test with Sweet Potato Varieties	46
Directions for Curing and Storage	47
During the Curing Period	47
After the Curing Period	48
Diseases and Their Control:	
Stem-rot	49
Stem-rot Control	49
Black-rot	49
Black-rot Control	49
Soft-rot	50
Dry-rot	50
Summary	50

IMPORTANCE OF THE CROP

For many years the sweet potato has been the most important truck crop in the South. Approximately 80 per cent of the entire crop is produced in what is commonly termed the cotton belt, although this section ships only about 30 per cent of the total carlot shipments and markets in carlots less than four per cent of its total production. This seems to indicate that the bulk of the southern crop is grown for local consumption rather than for shipment. However, it is not so much the fact that it is grown for home consumption as that there has not been created a demand for the southern sweet potato in the large consuming centers of the North.

Lack of conformity in many instances to established marketing principles has created a general reputation for poor grading, loose packing, unattractive packages and improper car loading. This condition is responsible to some extent for the slow progress that has been made in creating a general demand for one of our most widely adapted southern truck crops.

Approximately 115,000 acres of Georgia's farm lands are planted annually to sweet potatoes with a resulting crop valuation over a period of years of slightly less than eight million dollars.

A decidedly greater portion of the sweet potato crop of Georgia is produced in the coastal plain area, therefore the data embraced in this publication, which covers a ten-year period of study and observation, should be of particular interest to farmers of South Georgia.

ADAPTATION

The sweet potato thrives best in the warmer portions of the United States and is especially adapted to the coastal plain section of Georgia where the seasons are mild, the growing period long, the rainfall liberal and the soils of a light sandy nature.

