

Shoppers Guide Article for October30
Submitted by Larry Crouse, CEA Horticulture Agent

SWEET POTATOES HARVESTED BY MASTER GARDNERS

What is a Master Gardener? A Master Gardener is a person who has a thirst for knowledge about home horticulture, you know, all that stuff growing around your house - the lawn, the shade trees, the shrubs, the garden, the fruit trees, and even your houseplants. It is a person who wants to know things like; which tomato does best in Kansas, what are the best shade trees to plant in a small yard, what kind of fertilizer is best for my fescue, when should I prune my lilac, and how do I get rid of moles that are tunneling throughout my yard. Master Gardeners also are active in the community volunteering and helping with projects.

One of the projects they help with is sweet potatoes at the Numana Garden. This year the Butler County Master Gardeners harvested over 1,000 lbs. of sweet potatoes the third week of October. The sweet potatoes were grown at the Numana Community garden on N Gordy, from certified organic slips that were donated by the John C Pair Horticulture Research station located just south of Haysville, KS.

This is the second year that we have grown sweet potatoes at the Numana garden. Last year we were able to grow over 300 lbs. from 50 slips. This year we were given 200 slips and the harvest indicated again that we can expect an average of a little over 5 lbs of sweet potatoes per slip.

Sweet potatoes are not only easy to grow here; they are also one of the most nutritious vegetables available. Drought resistant and nutritious, high in Beta Carotene, Vitamin A and C and folic acid as well as many minerals, and besides the nutritional aspect they are also a great source of fiber for your diet. The only downside to growing sweet potatoes is that they are a favorite food of deer. We had originally planned on digging these spuds last week, but the torrential rains kept us from doing that. And in spite of the continued wet weather and cold temperatures we were able to find a window that we could get into the field to dig. It was a muddy mess, and kudos are deserved for all that participated.

These potatoes will be cured out for a couple of weeks and then distributed in time for Thanksgiving to those who are most in need here in Butler County. Many thanks to Numana and the Butler County Master Gardeners for making this happen!

For more information on Horticulture or the Master Gardener program, contact Larry Crouse at the Butler County Extension Office (316) 321-9660.