

# Attack of the Potato People

*Article written by: Kate Marsland, Master Gardener*

If you visited the Dakota County Fair last August, you may have participated in an activity we called "Make a Potato Head". We used cut up vegetables to make silly faces and hair on regular old potatoes. This month, we're doing the same project with a little twist; this time we'll grow potato people!

Here are the supplies you'll need:

- A sweet potato
- A baking potato
- Strong tooth picks or wooden skewers
- 2 clear jars with large mouths
- Small toys and odds and ends for dressing your potato people

Fill the jars half way with water. Push three toothpicks or pieces of skewer around the "Waist" of your potatoes and put them in the jars so the toothpicks rest on the sides of the jar. If the bottom of the potato doesn't reach the water, add some. Set the jars in a sunny window and add water every day so the potato doesn't dry out. If it turns cloudy, empty it out and add fresh water.

In a few weeks, the tops of the potatoes will sprout and grow leafy "hair". You can wait until then to decorate your potatoes, but it's more fun to do it at the beginning when your people are bald, and then do it again when they're hairy! Use doll purses and hats, baby sunglasses, buttons for eyes, even ribbons and bows! Draw a body for your potato on a piece of paper, wrap it around the jar and fasten it with tape. Your people could be punk rockers, ballerinas, anyone you like! You can use cut up vegetables to make the potato faces, too; watch what happens as the veggies dry up and "age" your potato people over time. However, you design your potato people, be creative and use stuff that's already around the house.

To learn more about how potatoes grow, read *Potato* by Barrie Watts. If you want to read something silly about potatoes, read *Luck With Potatoes* by Aubrey Davis. Older kids (ages 9-13), will like *Attack of the Killer Potatoes!* by Peter Lerangis.

March makes me start thinking about spring and growing new plants, so next month we'll do something fun with seeds!