

**Tatws
Cynaliadwy
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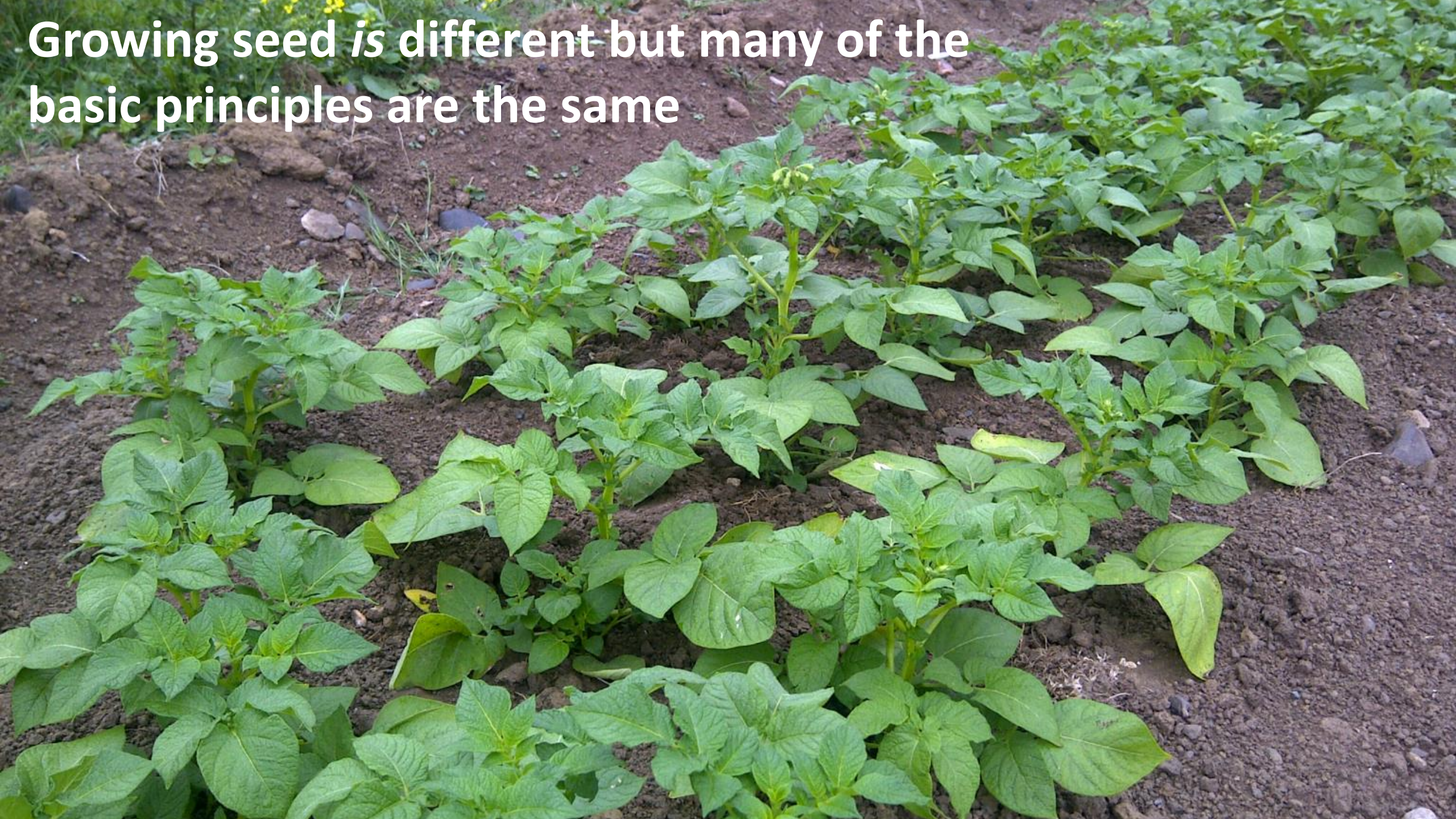


**Sustainable
Potatoes
Wales**

Growing seed potatoes and the Seed Potato Classification Scheme

Simon White, Technical Officer August 2016

Growing seed *is* different but many of the
basic principles are the same



So why grow Sarpo seed?

- Higher value crop than ware and avoids market volatility
- Guaranteed buy back via SPL
- Shorter growing season – fewer problems with late harvest plus possibility of re-seed post harvest
- Much easier to grow than other varieties

Economics of seed growing

- Margins in the area of £760/ha but dependent on yield and growing costs
- More from Tony
- Here we will concentrate on growing the crop and what it takes to get it certified as seed

Growing the crop – pre-planting

- Selection of appropriate site
- Statutory soil sampling for Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN)
- General soil analysis for NPK and important trace elements



Growing the crop – pre-planting



- Herbicide if needed and permitted
- Ploughed and power harrowed
- Fertiliser application
- Bedformed and de-stoned

Growing the crop – planting

- Closer spacing than ware crop to ensure smaller tubers and efficient weed suppression
- Ensure planter can plant at c8" and is in good order before planting!
- Pre-emergence herbicide applied asap after planting



Growing the crop – growing season



- Check the crop regularly for blight (less of a problem with Sarpo)
- Test dig later in the season and defoliate when tubers are the desired size (35/60mm). **THIS IS THE FRACTION YOU ARE PAID FOR!**

Growing the crop – haulm removal

- Conventional growers: flail and spray (Reglone, Harvest)
- Organic growers: flail or propane burner (larger scale only unless own kit!)



Growing the crop – harvest



- Allow skins to set for 2-3 weeks post haulm removal
- Boxes for harvest will be supplied by SPL
- Careful harvest will minimise damage and maximise marketable yield

Growing the crop – storage and grading

- Seed will be taken to a central store and graded to order
- SPL will cover all storage and grading costs
- Tuber tolerances can be very tough – a well grown crop will minimise outgrades





....but for the crop you have grown to be certified as seed it has to meet specifications laid down in the Seed Potato Classification Scheme

Certification – basic requirements

- Land tested and found to be free from PCN
- Crops inspected twice (at least) and must be within tolerances for grade applied for
- Correct rotations (min. 5 yrs) must be observed
- Correct isolation from other potato crops must be maintained
- Harvested tubers must meet specifications for grade applied for

Certification – field inspections



- Looking for diseased or “off type” plants
- Tolerances, especially for viruses, can be very tight
- Inspectors can pass, downgrade or fail a stock based on these findings
- Crop walking pre-inspection is therefore advisable!

Certification - isolations

- Seed of different grades must be grown a specified distance apart
- System designed to minimise viruses spread by aphids
- SPL staff and APHA inspectors will advise on this as needed

	P B T C	PB	S	SE	E	A and B
(b) From seed potato stocks entered to produce lower classes (N2) (N3)		BL from S 50m all other classes	BL from SE BL from E if crop planted with seed classified at S or SE. 50m all other classes	BL from E if crop planted with seed classified at S or SE. 50m all other classes	10m A B	
		(BL = Blank row or sufficient to give adequate separation at harvest)				
(c) From ware crops planted with PB, S or SE seed (N1)		50m	10m	10m	10m	10m
(d) From ware potato crops planted with E seed (N1)		50m	50m	50m	10m	10m
(e) From ware potato crops planted with A or B seed (N1)		50m	50m	50m	50m	10m
(f) From all other potatoes including ware crops planted with ineligible or unknown origin seed in neighbor's fields, gardens, allotments etc.		50m	50m	50m	50m	50m

Certification – tuber inspections



- Disease and damaged tubers assessed to given tolerances
- Excessive soil can make grading difficult
- Well grown crops will be easier to grade and more likely to pass first time

Finally.....

- Don't be put off by the regulations and technical aspects surrounding seed production. SPL and APHA staff will be available to help you at every stage of the process
- Good preparation is key – get everything lined up well in advance if possible
- The benefits of Sarpo potatoes will make the job easier, and more profitable, than you may think!



Any questions?