

# SWEET POTATO



I POMOEAE BATATAS



**Pennard**  
Growing the Dream

Sweet potatoes are considered to be one of the important food crops in the world.

Known in the Pacific as kumara in Peru as kamar. Introduced to Europe by Christopher Columbus then acclimatized by the Portuguese in Africa where it is also widely cultivated. Arab traders introduced it into Southeast Asia where it forms part of the everyday diet due to its nutritional properties.

- Sweet potato stems are long & trailing & bear generally green sometimes dark red leaves. (Climbing height to about 17 feet). The flowers are funnel shaped & tinged with pink or rose violet. The edible part is the enlarged tuberous root, The tubers have a smooth, fine, dark, yellow to violet rind & a white, yellow or orange, juicy flesh.
- Sweet potato is not hardy & propagated vegetatively through sprouts arising from the roots or the tuber or by cuttings of the vines which are planted in the spring. It is best adapted to light, well drained soils.
- The plants grow very quickly & need a lot of water. They are harvested before the first frosts. One single plant yields approximately 4.4 to 6.6 lbs. (2 to 3 kg) of sweet potatoes which are kept in cold or dry storage.
- Sweet potatoes contain many proteins, carbohydrates (10 to 15%), amino acids (5%), mineral salts & vitamins B & C. Because they have a considerable energetic value, they invigorate the organism. Moreover, they are easily digestible.
- Sweet potatoes are prepared like potatoes. Cooked in water or sautéed they are used to make purees, gratin's & soufflés. They can also be fried like French fries. In the US they are served caramelised along with the Christmas roast. They are also used in salads. The fresh leaves, rich in vegetable proteins (like soy bean sprouts) are eaten raw in salads or steamed.