

# The Potato Book, by Alan Romans

Review

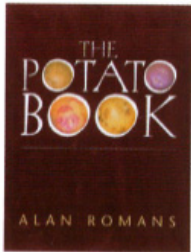
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## **The Potato Book**

ALAN ROMANS

144pp 2005

Frances Lincoln £16.99

ISBN 071122479X

### **A guide to the history and cultivation of potatoes, with an illustrated catalogue of cultivars**

Alan Romans is respected both by amateurs and professionals as an expert on (to use his terminology) 'heritage' potato cultivars. In this book he has combined the potato's history, a cultivation guide and a catalogue of 170 of the cultivars currently available.

He acknowledges in the introduction that he has not set out to give 'a balanced perspective on the history of the potato', nevertheless he has created

a valuable resource for gardeners, full of interesting trivia, such as the evolution of potato blight fungus, *Phytophthora infestans*, from a disease of seaweed. As an added bonus, the colour plates of potato tubers are as good as – or better than – those found in any similar book.

I have two slight criticisms. Firstly, I would have liked to see more included about current breeding trends and new commercial cultivars, such as 'Almera', 'Melody' and 'Vivaldi'. The author gives reasons for not including these, but some of these have been available from supermarkets for at least five years

and it would have been good to see recognition of them.

Secondly, I take issue when he writes, 'key people in the modern (potato supply) industry are convinced that flavour is not an issue'. This may have been true in the past, but less so today. More information could have been given on flavour and cooking type in the catalogue.

In conclusion, this is a publication that deserves a place on the shelf of all keen vegetable growers.

**RICHARD CROWHURST**

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