

**Experimental archaeology gardens rediscovering cultivation techniques for ancient Maori cultivars of sweet potato, *Ipomoea batatas* (L.) Lam. In New Zealand.** (Oral Presentation)

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**Introduction**

Experimental gardens using pre-European Maori gardening techniques and pre-European cultivars of sweet potato have rediscovered much about pre-European cultivars and traditional cultivation techniques

**Objectives**

To obtain data on yield for effort, soil nutrient depletion, cultivation practices, and cultivar performance associated with traditional pre-European Maori agriculture.

**Methods**

Two experimental archaeology gardens established adjacent to traditional garden sites on either of Cook Strait, New Zealand have been cultivated for over 5 years using traditional pre-European Maori gardening techniques and pre-European cultivars of sweet potato.

**Results**

Data on yield for effort from the gardens shows that good yields of sweet potato can be obtained growing traditional sweet potato cultivars using pre-European gardening techniques with a relatively low labour input and continuous viable production from the same soil for over five years is possible despite relatively low soil nutrient availability.

**Conclusion**

Results have challenged production figures and the rotation periods of early shifting agriculture given by some archaeologists writing about pre-European Maori agriculture. A benchmark has been established for yield for effort required for Pre-European sweet potato production. Many further questions about sweet potato production have been raised

**Keywords:** kumara, experimental gardens, pre-European Maori agriculture production

**Selected References**

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