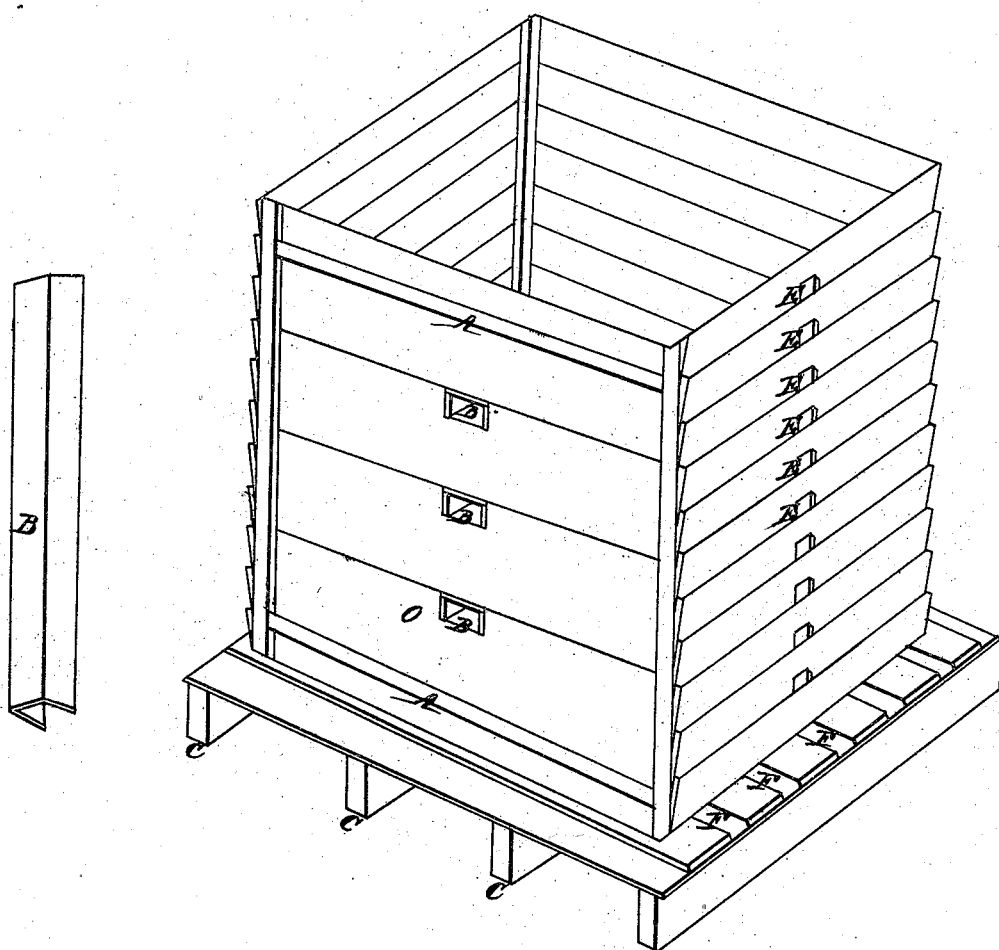


A. H. Vestal.

Preserving Potatoes.

N^o 3,708.

Patented Aug. 16, 1844.



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

AARON H. VESTAL, OF CAMBRIDGE CITY, INDIANA.

KEEPING SWEET POTATOES.

Specification of Letters Patent No. 3,708, dated August 16, 1844.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, AARON H. VESTAL, of Cambridge City, in the county of Wayne in the State of Indiana, have invented a new and improved mode of keeping sweet potatoes in the Eastern, Northern, Middle, and Western States through the winter as free from rotting as they can be kept in a southern climate; and I hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description.

The nature of my invention and discovery consists in so regulating the temperature of the air in the room in which the potato is to be kept so as to prevent them from becoming chilled or frozen or from becoming too warm either by reason of the artificial heat produced in the room or from becoming heated by two large quantities being packed together so as not to admit a free access of air either of which would prove destructive to the potato.

To enable others to use my invention and discovery I will more fully describe its construction and adaptation.

The accompanying drawing is a perspective view of the box or bin in which the potatoes are to be packed. It is constructed of four pieces of rough scantling, say 3 inches square and common rough weather-boards (or split clapboards would be preferable) and put together as follows: The size of the box should in no case exceed 3 ft. square at its base and it may be as high as the room in which it is to be placed will permit, being careful to allow a space of at least 6 inches between the top of the box and the ceiling. Three sides of the box is boarded up in a reversed manner from that usually employed in boarding the sides of a framed house as represented in the drawing for the purpose of admitting a free passage for air and yet so as not to permit the escape of the sand in which the potato is packed. Apertures for the passage of the air is formed by inserting wedges between the boards as is represented at letter E. The front of the box is held together by two pieces of scantling framed into the front posts as shown at A or two strips nailed across the front of the posts will answer. The box being thus constructed is placed on a platform elevated above the floor of the room some 6 or 8 inches for the construction of which three or four pieces of scantling 6 or 8 in. wide and 2 or 3 inches thick, as shown at C, on which place some square

edged boards transversely about the width of common flooring boards, the first course of which should be laid 3 inches apart; the next course should be placed over the spaces thus left forming grooves for the passage of air as shown at F. The box will then be ready for packing, in doing which I take a square edged board not exceeding 20 inches in width and after cutting it the proper length slip it down behind the front posts on its edge then lay in some two or three layers of potatoes; then I pour on fine sifted sand until all the interstices are completely filled up and when the box is filled up 18 or 20 inches I lay on an air tube running from the front to the rear of the box as shown at B on the body of the box also at B in a sectional drawing marked B which is made by nailing 3 square edged boards together that are some 6 inches wide forming a box with open ends and top the open side is turned down so as not to allow it to fill up with the sand and to admit a free passage for the air into the center of the potatoes when packed. The number of air tubes to be used to a box will be determined by its height, as they should not be more than 20 inches apart. In putting in these tubes I cut a place in the first board set up in front large enough to receive it as shown at O and so on until they are all inserted.

Where potatoes are designed to be put away for seed the following spring a dry basement story is preferable, as it will naturally be more damp than an upper room and the potato will thereby retain its natural plumpness and sprout earlier when planted or set in the warm bed. But potatoes intended for the table will do better in an upper room. Any person intending to keep potatoes for seed and for the table should have a house with a basement and upper story, the second floor of which should not extend to the wall on either side by about 6 inches. Under such circumstances the platform on which the boxes stand may run the full length of the room leaving a space of 6 inches between the wall and the platform, also leaving a convenient aisle down through the middle of the room, the platforms being arranged on both sides. A stove is then placed in the aisle of the basement story, the pipe connecting with a drum in the room over by which a proper temperature can be kept up which should be from 40 to 60 degrees, not being permitted to fall below or

rise above those degrees. Potatoes intended
to be kept through the winter should be dug
before frost and laid away in a room to dry
before they are packed. The attic story of
5 the house you have prepared to keep them in
will answer a valuable purpose for this.
They may be packed either in dry sifted
sand, pulverized charcoal or dry leaves or
chaff, but if they are put away in either of
10 the two latter articles a layer of it should be
put in the box before the potatoes are put in
and so on alternately as they will not pene-
trate the interstices as sand or even charcoal
will. Sand is preferable to either of the

above named articles as they are apt to im- 15
part a foreign taste to the potato.

What I claim as my invention and desire
to secure by Letters Patent is—

The box for keeping sweet potatoes said
box being constructed with ventilated sides 20
and air tubes the arrangement and construc-
tion of which is substantially as above de-
scribed.

AARON H. VESTAL.

Witnesses:

H. B. DENWIDDIE,

ANDREW A. CLEMENT.