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## **TO LIFT OR NOT TO LIFT SWEET POTATO VINES? – A POSSIBLE ANSWER TO A FREQUENT QUESTION**

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Sweet potato is a vigorously growing crop developing roots - even storage roots - from vine nodes touching the soil. Water and nutrients supplied to these roots are considered to be wasted, resulting in a reduced yield of marketable roots. We examined the effect of lifting vines on the yield and marketability of sweet potato in farm-size experiments (ca. 520 plants in 13 rows per treatment, shared between two repetitions) in Sarkad, East-Hungary, in two years. In 2019, the average yield per plant was 570 grams if vines were lifted and 520 grams if not. In contrast, in 2020, lower yield (730 grams) was achieved with lifting and higher (750 grams) without. The differences were not significant. In 2019, the qualification resulted in minor differences between the proportion of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> class tubers from the ‘lifted’ (81%) and the ‘non-lifted’ (80%) treatments. In 2020, the difference was 77% and 87%, respectively. Our results give a possible answer to the question: to lift or not to lift the sweet potato vines. As it is statistically revealed, the efficiency of vine lifting is not unequivocal. The difference between the yields achieved with or without vine lifting is not significant and even extrapolated to hectare level, the difference is not more than 1.5 tons Ha<sup>-1</sup>. This little difference makes the - even not always - beneficial effect and thus the necessity of vine lifting questionable, especially if considering how labor-intensive this activity is.

The research was supported by the “VP3-16.1.1-4.1.5-4.2.1-4.2.2-8.1.1-8.2.1-8.3.1-8.5.1-8.5.2-8.6.1-17” Rural Development Program.



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**13<sup>th</sup> May 2021**  
**Online**

**University of Szeged Faculty of Agriculture  
Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary)**

**Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" from  
Timisoara**

**Faculty of Agricultural Management (Romania)**

**Hungarian Academy of Sciences Regional Committee in Szeged (Hungary)**

**Foundation for Agricultural Modernization and Rural Development, Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary)**

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### **Book of Abstracts**

**University of Szeged Faculty of Agriculture  
13<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Published by:**  
University of Szeged  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Andrássy út 15.  
6800 Hódmezővásárhely, Hungary

**Responsible publisher:**  
Edit Mikó  
dean

**Executive editor:**  
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**ISBN : 978-963-306-790-1**