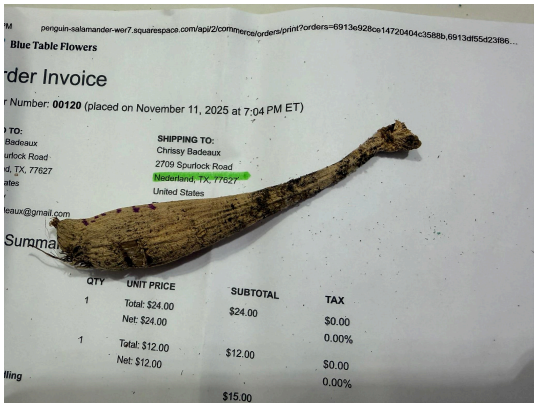
Original shipping pilot November 19, 2025
Blue Table Flowers and Chrissy L

This pilot was developed AFTER I (Blue Table Flowers) shipped to Chrissy using paper bags and woodchips, and the tubers arrived in less than stellar condition. Chrissy contacted me b/c she was concerned about how soft the tubers were. We communicated about her shipment, (I am not including that here), but she did offer feedback on other shipments she received, and she offered to help me test out shipping methods so that we could improve our customer service. Based upon our experience with the shipment I sent, and the anecdotal information about other orders Chrissy had received, we created a shipping pilot. ***please note, this trial was limited by financial constraints regarding shipping costs and knowledge about shipping methods

photos from original shipment of soft tubers:







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Chrissy's anecdotal information regarding other shipments. This feedback was used to make decisions about how to ship our pilot set of tubers:

> I've ordered from a few different places this fall & the ones that have arrived in the best condition have been wrapped in cling wrap in a paper bag with wood chips. (I got 3 tubers with them).
>
> The next best arrival conditions were in a ziplock bag with a small amount of vermiculite. (Got 8 tubers)
>
> The next were starting to shrivel some & were packaged in slightly damp peat moss in a paper bag. (6 tubers).
>
> Then the ones I got from y'all in wood chips in a paper bag.

These are Chrissy's notes about the shipments she received so far this year. Blue Table Flowers sent the tubers mentioned in the final note about wood chips and the paper bag. Based on this message/feedback, we designed the pilot to include ziplocs, saran wrap, and a base line tuber sent in a paper bag with woodchips to mimic the first order.

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Primary project goal: Find the best way to ship tubers so that they stay firm in transit and have the best value for the customer upon arrival. In an ideal world, there would be no need for any customer to contact us because of the condition of their tubers.

Secondary goals:

- Find a shipping/packing method that doesn't use plastic
- Find a shipping/packing method that is economical
    - Time of packer
    - Materials used to ship
    - Size of box used in shipping
- Find a shipping/packing method that has the least amount of waste
    - Packing materials
    - Financial waste = get the smallest box possible that can deliver great tubers

Considerations:

- Time in transit
- Dehydration of tuber
- Unplanned delays in shipping
- Shipping from zone 6B to a southern location, zone 9b, to begin the pilot (once we design a great method, we need to test other locations across the country.)

A few other factors. I didn't want to test a lot of things with vermiculite because it is so much more expensive than wood shavings, so I definitely had a testing bias. I also wanted to have the paper bags work out, so I definitely added those in hopes of staying away from plastic. Additionally, I wanted Chrissy to have a variety of tubers for her trouble, so I didn't ship all the same kind. However, I did send one Lark's Ebbe in plastic and one in a paper bag so we'd have something that we could compare. I also sent two Wine Eyed Jill, one in a plastic bag and one in a paper bag. Finally, because of my own experience with compostable plastic baggies (they hold a lot of humidity and seemed to increase mold in long term storage), I did not include any of those in the pilot.

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The pilot:

Here's how we sent the tubers, along with Chrissy's findings. That wise woman checked the tubers when the first arrived, and again after 7 days, reasoning that many orders can take that long to arrive.

1. Saran wrap on tuber, with woodchips inside a paper bag (Valley Porcupine)

2. Ziploc bag with vermiculite (Wine Eyed Jill)

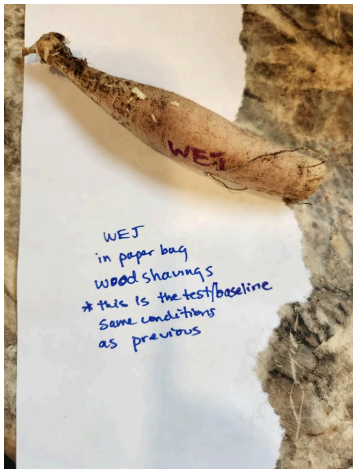
3. Ziploc bag with wood shavings (Lark's Ebbe)

4. Wood shavings in a paper bag with a sprinkle of water (Lark's Ebbe)* I thought I took a photo of this one, but I didn't. It was already on its way when I figured that out!

5. Wood shavings in a paper bag to mimic her original order (Wine Eyed Jill)

My photo 11/19 prior to shipping



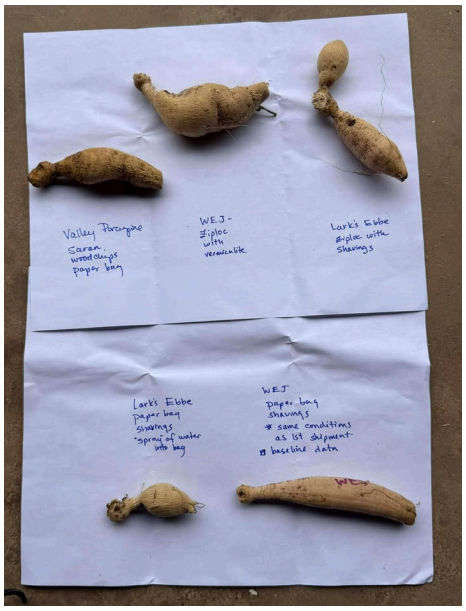


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Initial findings: Upon arrival 11/24

When the order first arrived, all of the tubers were in pretty good condition except for the WEJ which was the baseline tuber. (The one that was shipped in the original way–paper bag plus shavings.) That one had already started dehydrating and was a bit wrinkled.

Chrissy's photo 11/24:



I asked Chrissy about her preference as a consumer.

"Of the methods I used this time, were there any that you would prefer as a consumer? Maybe they weren't as messy, or one of the methods just seemed weird…"

Chrissy's reply:

"The only one I don't prefer is the paper bag with a really small amount of either wood chips or vermiculite (got from another company). I feel like they're not fully covered & just feels like it's not very well protected either from weather or getting banged around with shipping. As long as there was enough wood chips in the bag I was fine with it.

I guess paying for both the tuber & shipping the very small amount in the bag feels like it's not taken care of (if that makes sense). The quality of tubers have also been consistent with this opinion, I feel like. The only ones I received that have been soft/shriveled were packaged this way.

The difference is, if there's only a small amount of wood chips/vermiculite in a ziplock bag. Bc then it's at least sealed."

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Two days later 11/26: Chrissy left the tubers in the packaging on her counter, reasoning that several other orders she received took 7 days in transit. I'm not sure what the temp was where the tubers were, but I think it's a good test since we don't have any control over where tubers are hanging out prior to arriving at their final destination.

Here are her findings and photos 11/26 of the individual tubers:

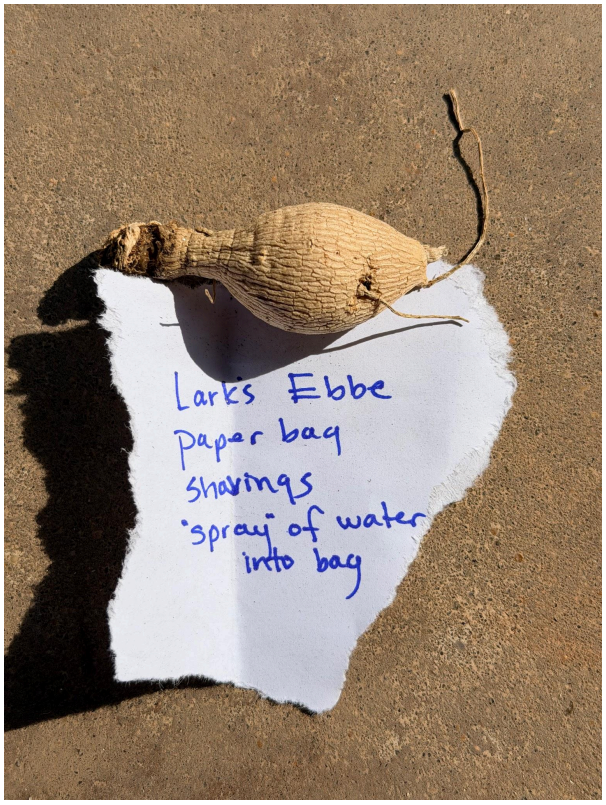
"Okay so I left them out on my counter to be a full week in the packaging to see what they'd do. (Because multiple places I ordered from took a solid 7 days to get here).

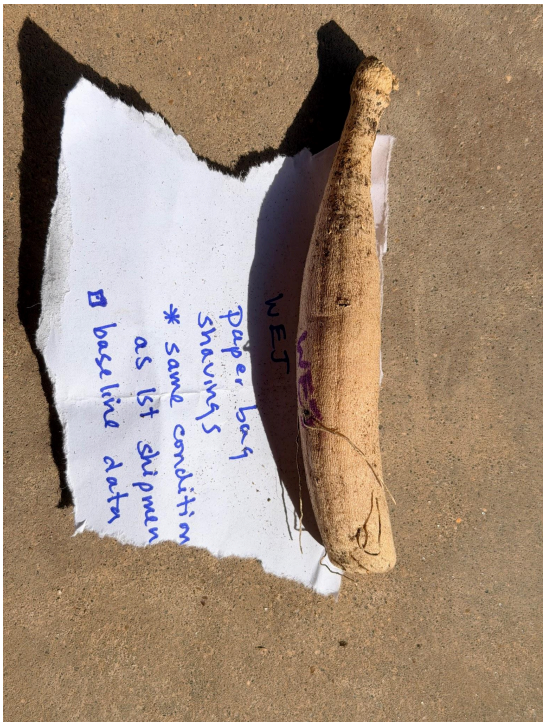
The results were much more telling!!

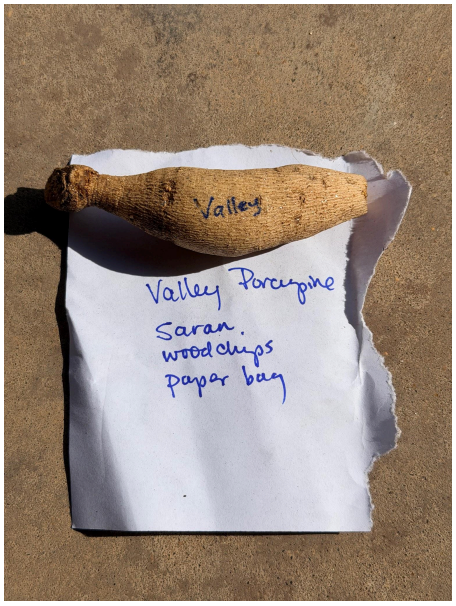
The only ones that stayed firm were the ones in the ziplock bags. The paper bag ones did the worst & the Saran wrap was not great either but better than just in the paper bags! (That one surprised me).

I took new pictures… I ended up putting the paper with the tuber."

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"In order from best to worst (in my opinion).

1. Ziplock with vermiculite WEJ - (pretty close to #2 but stayed a tiny bit more firm).

2. Ziplock with wood chips Lark's Ebbe - (not much different than with #1)

3. Saran Wrap Valley Porcupine- (definitely got softer… didn't wrinkle as much but is significantly different tangibly)

4 & 5 = paper bags WEJ and Lark's Ebbe - (tie & didn't seem to make a difference. They both shriveled more and became softer.)

If I received #1 or #2 it wouldn't make much difference and I'd be significantly happier with the tubers. I'd 10/10 order from that company again.

If I received #3 … ehhh honestly I may but if given a choice between two different companies I'd already bought from … I would buy whatever it was from the store that sold #1 & #2. I likely wouldn't risk buying something expensive from them.

If I received #4&#5 I likely wouldn't order from them again..."

Overall current findings: ship with ziploc baggies. Wood shavings or vermiculite.

Need to study further:

- Ship tubers that are all from the same clump
- Ship using compostable plastic bags
- Trial other methods?
- Try using UPS instead of USPS to gather more data, especially about speed of shipment
- Trial shipping with heat packs
- Trial shipping with insulation