

PEPPERS GROWING GUIDE



Peppers, like their relatives the tomatoes, are among the most popular of all garden vegetables. Peppers really jazz up the summer, with their bright, shiny, colorful skins and superb tastes and textures. You can choose from so many different tastes, from sweet to spicy hot. And they're so versatile in the kitchen, delicious raw, sautéed, grilled, roasted, or baked.

All peppers are warm weather fruits, and some varieties are ready as soon as 50 days after transplant.

Among our sweet and bell varieties are the white fruit Diamond Bell, which is very sweet; Purple Beauty, which is gorgeous and will set continuously; and Sunrise Orange, which is early and productive.

For those looking for hot and zesty, we offer ten varieties, including Poinsettia, which grows upright with brightly colored peppers that resemble the flowering plant. Our Early Jalapeno has an excellent flavor and is quite prolific. Habanero Orange is one hot orange pepper that turns red when mature.

WHEN TO SOW	SUN / PART SHADE	SEED SPACING	ROW SPACING	PLANTING DEPTH	SPACING AFTER THINNING	DAYS TO GERMINATE	DAYS TO MATURITY
Indoors 8-10 weeks before last frost	Sun	1-2 inches	18 inches	1 inch	12-18 inches	14	50-95 depending on variety

Soil and Fertilizing

Peppers likes light, loamy, slightly acidic soil with a pH between 6.2 and 6.8. Moderate fertilizer that is not too heavy on nitrogen or too light on calcium is best.

It's best to have your soil tested before planting, so you know what nutrients and pH adjustments may be needed. For a thorough soil test, consult your local county extension office. Fertilize and lime as directed by your soil test results.

Planting

It's best to sow pepper seeds indoors, 8-10 weeks before last frost, and harden off seedlings before transplanting. Plant two seeds to a pot.

Young pepper plants should be disease free, 6-9 inches tall, sturdy, with a medium to dark stem before you transplant them into your garden. Transplant them in moist, but not wet soil in the evening, or on a cool, cloudy day. It is imperative that the air and soil temperatures be warm for your peppers. Optimum growing temperatures are 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit for sweet peppers, and 70-85 degrees Fahrenheit for hot peppers.

Do NOT plant peppers next to onions, garlic, gladiolus, or potatoes

Watering

Uniform moisture is key, and it's critical during the fruit set and fruit development growing stages. Peppers need a lot of water; an inch a week, delivered consistently, is usually enough.

Harvesting / Storage

Bell peppers can be harvested at the mature green stage before any color develops. Colored bell peppers are harvested about 10 days after the mature green stage, and can be various shades of yellow, orange, and red. Colored bell peppers are sweeter than mature green bell peppers, and have higher levels of vitamins A and C.

Hot peppers are often harvested at the mature green stage, but in some cases (depending on the type) may be allowed to ripen to yellow, orange, red, and even purple. Sometimes the more toward the red end of the scale, the hotter the pepper is.

Refrigerate the peppers immediately after harvest, as cooling will remove field heat and improve shelf life. Peppers will retain good quality for approximately 14-21 days if stored at 47-55 degrees Fahrenheit.

For soil testing or other questions specific to your growing climate, please contact your local county extension agent. Visit <http://www.almanac.com/content/cooperative-extension-services> to find the office nearest you.