



Growing Peppers

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Peppers can be Fussy

Peppers like hot, sunny weather, and well-drained, fertile soil. They take longer to mature than most vegetables, but are well worth the wait.

When to Plant

Seeds should be started indoors, eight to ten weeks before the last frost date. Use a good quality light weight seed mix. Because the seeds take a long time to germinate, it is not recommended to plant the seeds directly into the garden. Purchased pepper plants, should have sturdy stems, dark green leaves, no blossoms, and no fruit.

Planting

Pepper plants should be planted 18 to 24" apart, and placed no deeper than the depth they were in the pot. They need full sun, (at least 6 hours a day), and moist, (not wet), well-drained soil. They require regular watering, and should be fertilized using compost, manure, or a well balanced fertilizer (eg. 10-10-10). If the plants grow taller than 12 inches, they will need support with either stakes or a cage. Harvest your peppers early and often, the more you

pick, the more the plant will produce. Never pull the fruit off the plant, but cut it off as this will prevent branch damage. Peppers can also be grown in containers where they will require regular watering, warmth, and lots of sun. Pepper plants are quite attractive and even add colour to borders and planters alongside your flowers.

Varieties to Plant

There are many varieties. They range from sweet, to extremely hot. Types of sweet peppers most often grown are Green, Red, Yellow, Orange, Banana, Cubanelle, and Cherry time. Hot peppers are Jalapeno, Anahaeim, Red Cherry, Red Chili. Extremely hot peppers to plant are Habanero, and Serrano. Use caution when planting those that are extremely hot, for many gardeners tend to pick and taste when out in the garden, and these hot peppers can cause severe burns when eaten raw. When growing hot peppers for storage, let them turn red before picking. Also, it is best to wear gloves, and remember not to rub your eyes when picking them.

Problems you Might Encounter

Problems are rare, but spider mites and aphids may appear. Irregular watering and lack of calcium could possibly cause blossom end rot.

Storage

Peppers be chopped and frozen. Hot peppers are usually dried or pickled and then used as a hot spice.

Learn more about growing peppers from the Cornell University site www.gardening.cornell.edu >

Learn more about pepper on Wikipedia >