

HOW TO GROW PEPPERS !

Peppers are generally classified in two categories – either hot or sweet.

When to Plant

Start indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost. Once all danger of frost has passed transplant into the garden. Young seedlings need to be hardened off prior to transplanting.

Location/Soil

Peppers prefer warm sunny area of the garden. They are also an excellent selection for container gardening.

Planting & Growing Information

Sow seeds 6 mm (1/4") deep and 5 cm (2") apart. Plants should be spaced 45 cm (18") apart with rows spaced 60 cm (24") apart.

Seeds germinate in approximately 7-14 days.

Days to Maturity

Sweet Peppers: 60-90 days from the time transplanted into the garden.

Hot Peppers: up to 150 days

Other Information

Make sure plants do not dry out. Consistent moisture throughout the growing season will provide the best harvesting results.

Harvesting & Storage

All peppers start off green and will change to their mature color as they are allowed to ripen on the plant.

Peppers can be picked when green which will increase the number of peppers produced from the plant or they can be left on the plant to ripen to their mature color.

Size and color give you the best clues when to harvest hot and sweet peppers. Often the decision of when to harvest is influenced by the intended use of a particular pepper. Depending on what the ultimate use will be, the optimum time to pick will vary considerably.

When harvesting, gently remove peppers from the plant. If they don't come away from the plant easily use a knife to remove the pepper so the plant remains undamaged.

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Once peppers begin to turn color, they progress quickly so should be monitored carefully. Once they reach their final color, peppers deteriorate very fast and should be picked right away.

Caution: Always be careful when handling hot peppers. Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers as the juice can burn skin and is especially dangerous if rubbed in the eyes or face. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

Hot peppers are typically green in early maturity but quickly turn colors including yellow, orange, purple and red depending on the variety as they ripen. Although they can be picked when green, their heat and flavor increases as they are allowed to mature and ripen to colors. Yields are smaller for hot peppers.

Sweet Bell Pepper varieties can be harvested and eaten when firm and full size but still green. Flavor and vitamin C content improves as they ripen on the plant. The less green you see, the sweeter the taste.

Companion Planting

Sweet Peppers

Likes: Basil, Tomato, rhubarb, eggplant, Lettuce, Asparagus, Parsley, Silver Beet, Spinach

Hot Peppers

Likes: Onion, Lettuce, Squash, Sweet Pepper, Cucumber

To Freeze Sweet Bell Peppers

1. Wash and core peppers. Chop, dice or slice according to how you plan to use them.
2. Spread in a single layer on a tray of a cookie sheet. Place tray in the freezer for an hour or longer.
3. Loosen pepper pieces from the tray and pour into zip closure freezer bags. Immediately place sealed bags in the freezer. The pepper pieces will remain separated for ease of measuring. Simply remove as many as you need, reseal the bag and return to the freezer.

To Freeze Hot Peppers (includes Jalapeno Peppers)

1. Wash peppers with cool water and allow to air dry.
2. De-stem the hot peppers by inserting a small knife where the base of the stem meets the top of the pepper and cut the stem free by working the knife around the entire edge of the stem. Pull out the stem, discard it and then shake out as many seeds as you can.

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- Hot peppers can be sliced or freeze them whole as it is not necessary to cut or chop the hot peppers before freezing. Either way, pack the clean, dry, de-stemmed peppers into freezer bags, leaving ½ inch of headroom at the top of the bag. Seal the bag, being sure to squeeze as much air out of the bag as possible. Immediately place the bagged peppers into the freezer.
- Caution: Always be careful when handling hot peppers. Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers as the juice can burn skin and is especially dangerous if rubbed in the eyes or face. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

Source:

McKenzie Seeds (www.mckenzieseeds.com), a longtime supporter of Plant • Grow • Share a Row

Links:

Seeds:

WWW.mckenzieseeds.com/collections/pepper



As part of your garden this year, plant and grow an extra row of your favourite veggies and donate the harvest to your local food bank. Help us help all those in need.

Special thanks to McKenzie Seeds for their great growing information and their long-time support for Plant • Grow • Share A Row