



J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift
and Garden Center

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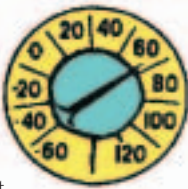
Peppers

Peppers are native to the tropical regions of South America. Early explorers discovered these new treasures in South America and took them back to Europe where they were readily accepted and enjoyed. Peppers became so popular that they quickly spread throughout the world. Two kinds of peppers are still popular today: **Sweet Peppers** and **Hot Peppers**. Although peppers are closely related to tomato plants, peppers are more demanding than tomatoes. Peppers require warm temperatures, and they need consistent moisture conditions to grow and produce an abundant harvest.



Temperature

Don't plant peppers too early in the spring. Wait until the average night temperature will stay above 55 degrees and the soil temperature has reached 60 degrees before trying to plant peppers. Peppers like the heat and they are very sensitive to the frost. Peppers cannot tolerate cold nights or cold soil conditions.



Peppers grow best when the soil temperature is between 70 to 80 degrees and when the air temperature is between 65 to 85 degrees. Peppers set fruit when nighttime temperatures are between 60 and 70 degrees. If the night temperature is too cold or too hot, the blossoms will drop off and not set fruit (tomato plants react to night temperatures in the same manner). Use **Fertilome Pepper & Tomato Set** if the blossoms do not set fruit when they should, especially during the hot summer weather. Peppers rarely drop their flowers for an extended period of time. It is usually just a problem during June and July. Unfortunately, that is the time the peppers need to set fruit so the peppers have time to ripen before it gets too late in the fall.

Pepper plants may struggle and wilt during the day, if the nighttime temperature stays above 80 degrees, but the plants do not usually die. Peppers grow and produce fruit better during warm and hot weather than in cold conditions.

Planting Time

Apply two pounds of **Dr. Earth Vegetable Garden Food** per 100 square feet and spread one inch of **Bumper Crop, Soil Pep, or "well-rotted" compost** over the soil. Do not use fresh manure, it can rob nutrients from the soil. Roto till the soil as deeply as possible.



Plant peppers 12 to 24 inches apart. Water plants with **Root Starter** as soon as you plant them. Fertilize them again every two weeks, with **Root Starter**, for the first month. Once the pepper plants are rooted and growing, fertilize them regularly with a high phosphate fertilizer, such as **6-10-4 Vegetable and Tomato Fertilizer**. Fertilize peppers every six to eight weeks until mid-August. Do not apply too much fertilizer. Too



much fertilizer may produce a lush plant, but it might be at the expense of producing fruit.

Insect Problems

Many insects live on pepper plants. Aphids, Cutworms, Flea Beetles, Leaf Miners, and Mites are just a few of the insects you will need to control. Spray or dust your plants regularly with either **Sevin, Eight, or Malathion** to control these pests. Be sure to read the label before harvesting; to make sure that you have waited the proper length of time before eating the fruit. Slugs and snails are also attracted to pepper plants. Regular applications of **Corry's Slug and Snail Bait** or **Sluggo** is the best way to keep these pests under control.



Disease Problems

Peppers are sometimes affected by a disease known as **Anthracnose**. This disease can sometimes be prevented by just keeping the plants healthy - plenty of water and fertilizer. Anthracnose creates dark spots on the leaves and forms dark, sunken spots on the fruit. Pinkish spores may appear within these dark spots. Spray your plants with **Daconil** or **Neem Oil** every 10 to 14 days to control this disease if it becomes a problem. Be sure to wait the proper length of time after spraying before harvesting the fruit.

Peppers are sometimes affected by the **Tobacco Mosaic Virus**, the same disease that affects tobacco plants and tomato plants. Symptoms of this disease vary but most plants have malformed leaves. The leaves become stringy, mottled, and fern-like with age. Affected leaves are sometimes confused as being sprayed with a weed killer because of their fernlike appearance.

The fruit may be mottled and may ripen unevenly. There is no control for this disease. Remove and destroy any affected plants. Crop rotation is the best method to prevent this disease from spreading further in the garden. People who use tobacco products spread this disease just by touching plants after touching infected tobacco products (cigarettes).

Blossom end rot is not a disease but it is a physical problem that affects peppers in the same way it affects tomatoes. Blossom end rot causes a brown or black region on the blossom

end of the fruit. Blossom end rot is caused by physical stress within the plant, usually from inconsistent watering. If a plant is under stress it cannot absorb and utilize calcium in the soil. Prevent blossom end rot by keeping plants growing healthy. Water plants consistently, mulch plants to prevent water loss and to reduce excessive heat. You can also add extra calcium (gypsum) to the soil to help prevent blossom end rot.

If your peppers do have blossom end rot, you can still eat them. Just remove the bad portion and eat the rest.

If your peppers 'always-have-blossom-end-rot' or they 'just-don't-grow', try adding two tablespoons of **Epsom Salt** and four tablespoons of **Gypsum** around each plant when you first plant your peppers. You will be pleased with the results later in the summer.

Harvest Time

Harvest bell peppers anytime they are a good size. The skins should be firm and shiny. Peppers can be harvested green (immature) or they can be left to ripen on the plant (yellow, red, or purple). The older the pepper, the thicker the skin will be. Sweet peppers always remain mild, even when they are completely ripe and mature. Extreme hot and dry conditions may cause the pepper to have a stronger flavor than usual, but they will be not turn hot.



Harvest hot peppers when they reach a good size. Hot peppers may be harvested before they are completely ripe. Hot peppers do not get hotter if they stay on the plant to maturity. Many hot peppers have oils on the surface that will irritate and burn your eyes and skin. Use rubber gloves while harvesting and preparing hot peppers. Do not touch your eyes or skin with the rubber gloves. Hot pepper stems, skins, seeds, and meat all contain the hot oils. Be careful.

An average yield of peppers per 25 foot row is 12 to 15 pounds of sweet peppers; or 16 to 20 pounds of hot peppers.

Sweet Peppers

Better Belle - 65 days - Medium long, four lobed, thick walled fruit. Glossy green fruit matures to red. Plants grow 1.5' to 2' tall.



Big Bertha - 72 days - Three or four lobed, deep green to red fruit with very thick walls. Largest variety of bell pepper: 7" long by 4" wide fruit. Plants grow 2.5' tall.

California Wonder - 73 days - Four lobed fruit. Fruit grows 4" long by 4" wide. Good for stuffing, delicate flavor.

Cubanelle - 68 days - Yellowish-green, Italian type, frying pepper. Fruit grows 6" long, turns red when mature.

Giant Marconi Hybrid - 72 days - An improved Italian grilling pepper. Six to eight inches long. Early ripening. Green turns red when ripe. Smoky, sweet flavor.

Golden Bell - 68 days - Early maturing, very sweet pepper with large thick walls; turns golden yellow when mature.

Gypsy Hybrid - 62 days - Yellow to orange-red fruit. Three lobed, wedge shaped fruits; 4" to 5" long. Tolerates cool weather better than most varieties.

Jupiter - 72 days - Large, thick, 4-lobed peppers. Green fruit turns red at maturity. Blocky fruit.

Lady Bell - 65 days - New hybrid bell pepper. Good flavor. Green bell pepper; turns red when mature.

Keystone Giant - 75 days - Very popular variety. Large, blocky four-lobed fruit: 3.5" long by 4.5" long. Very thick walls. Dark green fruit turns red when mature. Tolerates high heat. Plants grow 2.5' tall.

Pimento - 95 days - Large 4" long by 3" wide heart shaped peppers with very thick walls. Turns bright red when mature.

Purple Bell (Purple Beauty) - 75 days - Four lobed 3.5" square fruit. Dark green fruit turns purple then red when mature. Fruit turns green when fried.

Sweet Banana (Hungarian Yellow Wax Sweet) - 70 days - Long 6" peppers. Fruit ripens from light green to yellow to red when mature. Mild sweet flavor.

Red Sweet Cherry - 85 days - Small round fruits; 1" to 1.5" diameter. Green fruit ripens to red. Use either red or green. Good for pickling.

Yolo Wonder - 73 days - Four lobed, dark-green fruit; turns red when mature. Fruit are 4" long by 4" wide. Plants grow 2' tall.

Hot Peppers

Anaheim Chile - 80 days - Medium hot. Milder flavor than other varieties. Long 6" to 8" fruit on 28" to 34" tall plants.



Big Jim - 75 days - Long, 10" fruit. Green fruit turns red when mature, Mildly hot flavor.

Cayenne Red - 70 days - Fiery hot flavor. Long fruit often twisted and curled. Great for drying, processing, or salsa.

Garden Salsa - 73 days - Tapered green fruit ripens to red color. Mildly hot flavor.

Habanero - 90 days - Incredibly hot flavor. Small, golden-orange fruit 1" by 1.5". Thin walled and wrinkled. Prefers warm, moist conditions. Handle with care, even touching fruit can cause burns.

Hungarian Yellow Wax (Hot Banana) - 72 days - Fairly hot. Early and prolific. Waxy yellow peppers ripening to orange-red. Fruit grows 5" to 6" long by 1.5" diameter. Use for drying, processing, or salsa.

Jalapeno - 75 days - Very hot flavor. Dark-green fruit ripens to red. Grows 3" long tapered peppers with a rounded tip. Prolific producer and provides continuous harvest.

Mexi Bell - 70 days - Mildly-hot flavor. Three or four lobed green bell pepper. Turns red when mature.

Red Cherry Hot - 80 days - Very hot. Small, nearly round 1" to 1.5" fruit. Medium thick walls. Dark green fruit turns red when mature. Continuous fruiting over a long season.

Red Chile - 85 days - Very hot. Small 2.5" long fruit tapering to a blunt point. Use for drying or salsa.

Santa Fe Grande - 76 days - Medium Hot. Yellow peppers turning orange-red when mature. Conical fruit 3.5" long by 1.5" diameter. Medium thick skin.

Serrano Chile - 80 days - Very pungent, hot pepper. The plant grows 30" to 36" tall and bears thin-walled, 2" slender fruit. Prolific producer over a long time.

Spanish Spice - Long green pepper turns red when mature. Ripens early season. Spicy flavor.

Thai Hot - 64 days - Very hot. Small cone shaped fruit. Green fruit turns red when mature. Small compact plants.

