

## Peppers (capsicum)



### Seed Starting/Propagation:

- Start seeds indoors about 8 weeks before the last frost.
- Keeping them at a consistent temperature of 70 degrees will help them germinate faster.
- Once sprouted move to light as soon as the first shoot appears.
- Transplant after the last frost date when the soil has warmed (ground temperature should be about 65 degrees).
- Be careful when transplanting because pepper roots are very sensitive. Plant in full sun about 12-16 inches apart or one plant per square if doing a square foot garden.

### Care:

- Consistent moisture is necessary for sweet peppers, so make sure they are always moist.
- Hot peppers like it more dry than wet, giving about an inch of water each week is sufficient. Try not to get the leaves wet when watering, it can cause fungal and wilt infections.
- Mulch around each plant after transplanting. This is important for peppers since they like it warm and the mulch keeps the ground warm, while also holding in moisture and preventing weeds from sprouting.

### Companion Planting:

- Don't plant with other varieties of peppers since they can cross pollinate, making sweet peppers hot and hot peppers more mild.
- Don't plant near beans.
- Plant with okra, basil and tomatoes.

### Harvesting:

- Harvest anytime depending on how big you want your pepper and what color.
- Cut from the bush, leaving a once inch stem so they will store longer. Don't yank off the plant or you could take the whole plant out.

### Preserving:

- Dehydrate whole or chopped.
- Powders - open dried peppers and remove seeds, blend into a powder.
- Freeze - chop them up and spread them over a cookie sheet to freeze. Once frozen break apart and store in a freezer bag.

### Seed Saving:

Cut open a pepper, scrape out the seeds and allow them to dry for a week or two. Make sure you wear gloves when handling the hot peppers so you don't burn your fingers. Store in an airtight container or seed envelope.