

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing peppers

Peppers come in all different shapes, sizes and flavors with the most common being the bell pepper. They range in flavors from sweet and mild to extra hot and can be eaten raw, stuffed or added to recipes. Although some gardeners purchase pepper plant starters instead of growing the plant from seed, gardeners who opt to grow plants from seed will have more options when it comes to the type of pepper plants they want.

To plant:

Since peppers are warm-weather plants with a long growing season, gardeners in northern climates can begin their peppers inside. Begin peppers indoors eight weeks before the last frost date, but if you're planting hot peppers, you can plant them up to 12 weeks indoors before the last frost date. Plant seeds ¼ inch deep by laying the seeds on top of the soil and gently poking them below. If planting hot pepper seeds, be sure to wear gloves during the process. If planting peppers in a seedling tray indoors, add a plastic lid after planting to encourage warm and moist soil, which quickens the germination process.

Pepper seeds also can be soaked in a cup of warm water mixed with a teaspoon of hydrogen peroxide for up to eight hours prior to planting to quicken the germination process. When transplanting, peppers grow well in the garden but also are great for container or pots.

To grow:

Transplant the pepper seedlings to the garden one week after the last frost date. When transplanting, space plants 12 to 18 inches apart. Plant in an area with full sun. Once fruits begin to appear on the plant,



[California Wonder Pepper seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

the plant may become weighed down and require extra support, such as a tomato cage or a stake. Although peppers need water, don't overwater the soil to make it sodden.

To harvest:

Peppers are harvestable whenever they reach the desired size. Green peppers are just immature red, yellow, orange and purple peppers. To harvest, hold the plant and cut the pepper from the stem so it doesn't damage the plant. Sweet varieties can be ready for harvest in as little as 60 days, whereas the hot peppers take longer to grow, such as up to 150 days. Jalapenos are ready to harvest when their color is a deep, dark green and other hot varieties typically mature from green to their final coloring, such as yellow or red, when they are ready for harvest. For hot peppers, harvesting encourages more growth. Be sure to use gloves when harvesting hot peppers.

What peppers crave:

Once a pepper plant's first true leaves form, it is time to fertilize. Although fish emulsion



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and compost can be worked into the soil prior to planting, pepper plants like to be fed throughout their growing season as well. Top dress the soil with a granular fertilizer once or twice during the growing season and a liquid fertilizer once or twice throughout the growing season. When the plants are young, don't use the full fertilizer dosage, but increase the strength as the peppers grow.

Where to buy pepper seeds:

Urban Farmer sells many different kinds of peppers from bell peppers ranging in color to jalapenos and ghost peppers. Urban Farmer also sells pepper mixes, like rainbow bell pepper blend or a hot pepper blend, all available on our website at ufseeds.com!



Early Jalapeno Pepper seeds
available at ufseeds.com



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