



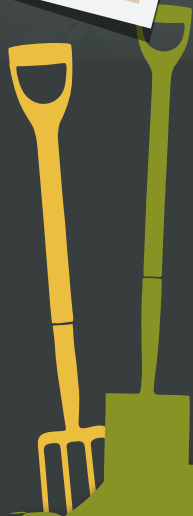
Peppers

Peppers offer a crunchy, satisfying and zingy addition to any pizza. Their great texture, flavour and vibrant colour is a welcome addition to many pizza toppings.

By growing an assortment of varieties you can have mild, meaty peppers, slightly spicy peppers, and hot peppers for bold jolts of flavour.

All sweet peppers come from the species *Capsicum annuum*, which is the same species as most commonly grown chillies. Ultimately, chillies and peppers are grown in the same way, so if you can grow chillies, you should have no problem growing pepper.

As peppers change from green to yellow, orange, or red, both their vitamin content and flavour improve dramatically. People who think they don't like peppers often change their minds once they have tasted fully ripened, garden-grown peppers.



Peppers

Sweet, crisp peppers in rainbow shades have a preference for a long, warm growing season. Follow these steps to get delicious peppers in no time!

Choose your pepper plant

Dainty or daunting, mild or fiery – the never-dull pepper has many guises with somewhere between 2,000 to 3,000 different varieties grown worldwide.

With so many varieties of peppers to try there is, of course, a pepper for every taste and mood. Yet all of the peppers we grow today are derived from just five main species. These have been hybridised over the years to create the astounding variety of shapes, colours, sizes and heat levels we now enjoy.

One of the most commonly seen and great for pizza toppings is the Bell Pepper. The standard sweet peppers, available in green, yellow, orange, red, and other colours. The green peppers are essentially under-ripe fruits, which will turn yellow or red as they mature. Sliced into salads, stir-fried, roasted in chunks or scattered over pizza, there isn't much you can't do with a bell pepper!

Sowing time

- > Grow them in a greenhouse or raise them in pots on a south-facing patio or windowsill.
- > Plant up outside in June

Planting your peppers

Peppers need a warm, sunny spot for the best results. Ideally, grow them in a greenhouse or raise them in pots on a south-facing patio or windowsill.

It is best to grow your peppers in 30cm pots of peat-free, multi-purpose compost. Wait until all risk of frost has passed before moving them to their final growing positions outside, in a sunny spot.

Make sure your pot has good holes in the bottom to allow good drainage.

Fill 30cm pots up to halfway with compost, then carefully transfer your pepper plant into the pot, before filling and packing with more rich soil.

Crop Care

Once planted out, peppers require very little attention. Pinch out the growing tips when plants are about 20cm tall to encourage bushy growth. Tall varieties may need staking.

Water your pepper plants regularly but do not keep the soil too wet. The soil must be free draining. As soon as the first flowers appear, add a liquid fertiliser every two weeks. Then add a potassium fertiliser every time you water when the fruits have begun to swell.

In hot weather, mist pepper plants to increase humidity and deter spider mites

Harvesting your peppers

Pick your chillies 12 – 14 weeks from transplanting. It can vary when fruits are ready due to weather and positioning.

Some varieties are best when the fruits are green and others may be left on the plant for two-three weeks until they change to red or creamy yellow.