

[Growing peppers](#) in the home garden, or containers, is easy, fun, and rewards you with delicious peppers, both hot and sweet. If you are familiar with growing seeds, and plants then growing sweet peppers, or hot peppers is a snap.

To get started you'll need good soil (lots of organic matter, and good drainage),and a warm enough growing season. Peppers prefer full sun, and warm - but not hot soil, (65 degrees Fahrenheit is ideal). The soil should have average Ph, and proper fertility. Soil test kits are sold at most garden centers, and your county Ag. Dept. many times will test your soil for a small fee. Let them know you are growing peppers, and they will tell you what you need to add if anything. Once your garden is ready you can plant your peppers.

In the more northern planting zones you should start growing pepper seeds indoors six to eight weeks before the last frost date. Although you don't need to start your own plants, as they are readily obtainable in the Spring. Many times the local Farmers Markets have some of the hard to get varieties. After the danger of frost has passed, and the weather has warmed they can be transplanted out in the garden. If the weather is cold, (peppers don't like temperatures below 50 degrees Fahrenheit), you may want to wait a few days to plant them. The plants should be spaced about 18 inches apart in rows three to four feet apart.

In warmer climates you can start growing pepper seeds directly in the planting bed. After the danger of frost has passed, and the weather is warm you can start planting your pepper seeds. The seeds should be planted about 1/2 inch deep in evenly moist soil, in rows three to four feet apart. After germination they should be thinned to about 18 inches apart.

When the seed started plants get their first true leaves, or the transplants have had about one week to recover from shock they should be fertilized with a good quality water soluble fertilizer for vegetables. This can be repeated according to the directions on the fertilizers package. You should stop fertilizing when the pepper plants begin flowering as too much nitrogen will produce lush plant and leave growth, but little to no fruit.

Now that you have growing pepper plants, it's a good idea to mulch them to prevent weeds and help keep the soil moist. They will need 1/2 to one inch of water per week through to harvest. This can vary according to the weather. If it is hot, windy, and dry they may need more water. You should avoid over head watering when your peppers are flowering as it tends to hamper pollination. A soaker hose or drip watering is better. It is also a good idea to stake or cage the peppers, as they tend to fall over with the weight of their fruit.

Peppers generally grow without many problems, but there are a few things to watch for. If cut worms are a problem in your garden A collar or ring of card board may be placed around each plant. If the plants have fungal problems treat with an organic copper based fungicide. Insects can be treated with appropriate insecticides. Since there are many different types of insects and treatments, you should ask someone at your garden center or county Ag. Dept. as to the type of treatment to be used.

Your peppers should be harvested when ready, as they will stop producing fruit if left unpicked. They may be picked whenever they are the size and color that is normal for their variety.

After harvesting comes the best part of [growing peppers](#). Using them. Preserve either hot peppers or sweet peppers by pickling them, freezing them, or stringing and drying them. Cook them in your favorite recipes. Such as Chile, Stuffed peppers, stir fries, grilling, etc, and etc. Or eat them fresh in salads, salsas, or cut up and whole for a snack. After all that why you grow them, to eat them. Enjoy your peppers!