

How to grow: Peppers

Peppers are a close relative of the tomato, but are more cold sensitive and usually require more fertilization.

When to Plant: Plants are usually set as transplants in the garden and should be planted 1-2 weeks after setting tomatoes. Peppers exposed to cold temperatures early in the season will often drop their fruit, resulting in a large, unproductive plant. Mid May is a safe time to plant peppers in most of central KS.

Space: Set plants 18" to 2' apart in rows 15" apart. Hot peppers usually produce a larger, more sprawling plant and requires more space.

Care: Peppers thrive in well-drained fertile soil. Water is required in dry periods. Even, consistent watering is preferred as peppers can develop blossom end rot, a brown leathery patch at the base of the fruit. They require a slightly more fertile spot than tomatoes, but gardeners should avoid over-fertilization. Harvest fruit when they are the desirable size to keep the plants producing more. Poorly shaded fruits may be subject to sunburning in hot summer conditions.

Harvest: Carefully pick or cut peppers from the plant. Avoid pulling on the fruit as you can easily break the plant. Peppers that have begun to turn color usually will continue after harvest. Hot peppers produce an oil which will penetrate the skin and cause discomfort if you get it in your eyes or other sensitive areas of the body. Use rubber gloves to harvest very hot peppers. Sweet peppers can be chopped and frozen for later use; hot peppers can be frozen or dried. Store peppers for up to a week in a refrigerator.



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