growing GUIDE

PEPPERS

Peppers are a warm-season crop and resistant to many garden pests. Peppers come in a lot of different varieties that can accomidate just about anybody's taste buds; spicy, sweet, or hot.

VARIETIES

The top varieties Colonial Gardens recommends are 'California Wonder', "Jalepeno' and 'Poblano'

Colonial Gardens sells pepper transplants, and we recommend this route if you are a newer gardener, or if you didn't start your seeds in time.

PLANTING

You will want to start seeding your peppers 8-10 weeks before last spring frost date.

The temperature needs to be at least 70 degress for seed germination. For best result keep the peppers in a warm area.

Start pepper two seeds to a pot and thin out the weakest seedling.

10 days before transplanting harden off the plant by placing outdoors in a partly shaded area.

Once the last frost has come and gone you can transplant your plants outdoors 18-24 inches apart.

They prefer soil that is well-drained and need to be watered 1-2" per week. If it's hot and dry outside, peppers may need to be watered everyday.

FERTILIZING

Pepper plants benefit from a bit of sulfur, so be sure to include when fertilizing. Too much nitrogen will reduce fruit from growing. A complete fertilizer should be sufficient.

Fertilize prior to transplant and after the first fruit set.

INSECTS & DISEASES

Common pests to peppers are aphids and flea bettles. Aphids are small green insects that coat the stems and undersides of leaves. Flea bettles are small, black and shiny, they leave small holes in the leaves. Insecticidal soaps may help control them.

A common disease is blossom end rot. Consistent water and sufficent calcium helps prevent this.

HARVESTING

When peppers reach their mature size they are ready for the picking. If you want a really sweet bell pepper then be sure to leave it on the plant for a longer amount of time. Bell peppers ripen to orange, red or yellow.

Peppers can be stored in refrigerated plastic bags for up to 10 days after harvesting.

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