

Pepper, hot (for cooking)

Capsicum annuum

Traditional recipes can provide good guidance on how to use particular peppers. Slightly spicy Anaheim is a traditional stuffing pepper, while Pasilla Bajio's mild smoky flavor has become associated with mole, a Mexican chocolate sauce. Poblanos are prepared in a variety of fashions, including stuffed (chiles rellenos), topped with walnut sauce (chiles en nogada), and roasted and seasoned (rajas). Cooking with peppers that have only moderate heat allows other flavors in the dish to come through.

TIP – Roasting brings out the flavor of hot peppers. Coat with vegetable oil, broil them until they begin to char, and then turn. Place the roasted peppers in a covered bowl to loosen the skins.

Location and soil Grow peppers in full sun. Soil should be well drained and high in organic matter. Raised beds are ideal, as they warm up faster than surrounding soil.

When to Plant Sow seed indoors about 2 months prior to the planting date in your area, providing bottom heat to speed germination. Transplant seedlings to larger pots as necessary. Wait to set transplants out until the soil has warmed to at least 65°F and nighttime lows stay above 50°F.

Germination Most hot peppers will sprout in 10 days to 2 weeks. Seeds will germinate poorly or not at all in cold soil. Best germination occurs when soil temperature is between 70° and 85°F.





Plant Spacing Spacing will vary by variety but in general allow 15 inches to 2 feet of space between plants, and about 3 feet between rows.

Garden Care Provide steady moisture to peppers as they grow. Support plants with stakes or cages as they become laden with fruit to prevent branches from breaking off or whole plants from sprawling. Temperatures higher than 90°F can cause blossom drop, so try to provide shelter from afternoon shade during periods of extreme heat. Change the location of the pepper bed every year to prevent disease problems.

Fertilize Fertilize with an all-purpose vegetable food at the time of planting, and side-dress with compost or fertilizer when the first flowers appear.

Harvest Peppers can be used at the immature green stage or fully ripe, so pick them as you need them. Use pruners or garden shears when harvesting fruits to avoid damaging the plant.

Nutrition A serving of hot pepper provides an ample supply of Vitamins A and C.

	Pasilla Bajio 	Anaheim 	Poblano 	Sweet Banana 
Description	Plants reach 2-3 feet in height	Vigorous plants grow to 3 feet. Very productive.	Plants grow to about 2 feet tall.	Vigorous 2-ft plants produce large numbers of peppers.
Fruit	Slim fruits, 6-10 inches long, mature from dark green to chocolate brown.	7-9 inch long, tapered peppers mature from green to red. Often picked green.	Fruits are 3-6 inches long and 2-3 inches wide; ripen from dark green to dark red.	4-6 inch fruits start out yellow and change to orange and then red. Harvest at any stage.
Comments	100-250 Scoville heat units.	500-2,000 Scoville heat units.	500-2,500 Scoville heat units.	0-500 Scoville heat units.
Uses	Mole sauce	Chiles rellenos	Roasting, stuffing	Pickling, stuffing
Harvest	75-85 days	75-80 days	75-85 days	60-75 days