

# Your Quick Guide for Growing Peppers

Give peppers at least six hours of full light each day  
Plant peppers in slightly acidic soil that's warm and moist  
Grow peppers after the last frost so they stay warm and healthy  
Peppers can take up to three months to be ripe and ready for harvesting  
Pick peppers based on what ripeness looks like for their variety

## Which Peppers Should You Grow?

Excited by the thought of growing a peck of peppers? Start by choosing the right variety; starting with versatile varieties like bell peppers, jalapeños, or Anaheim peppers.

## Planting Peppers

Whether you've planted from seed or are planning to transplant, you'll likely want to bring your pepper plants outside for the best chance of survival and the most comfortable life.

After planting, you can expect peppers to start fruiting and reach maturity between 65 and 85 days depending on the care they receive and the variety of pepper.

## Companion Planting

A helpful tip for protecting your peppers naturally? Companion planting is a great preventative measure. Consider interplanting peppers with companion plants, like basil or marigolds, to deter pests and attract beneficial insects.

## Caring for Peppers

Once your peppers are in the ground, they won't ask for anything too strenuous—most varieties are relatively easy plants to grow and cultivate. By ensuring they get the light, water, and soil necessary for them to thrive, you can have a healthy harvest in a few months.

Be aware of how your variety of pepper grows. While some stay lower to the ground, taller varieties will need some kind of trellis or stake. This supports them as they grow and will prevent breakage under the weight of fruit.

## Light

Peppers love sunlight, whether planted in a bed or in containers on your deck. They should be positioned to receive at least 6 to 8 hours of sunlight. While they love sun, just be conscious of any recently pruned areas that may not be used to that level of exposure and can burn or leave room for the fruits to burn.

## Soil

Peppers do best in slightly acidic soil—a pH between 6.0 and 6.8 is ideal. Soil should drain well and stay warm as they grow, hence why post-frost planting is important. This is particularly important for pepper plants and seeds that have been sown or transplanted.

## Fertilization

Occasional sprinkling of a balanced fertilizer is okay. Too much can boost the look of the leaves but hinder fruit production.

## Watering

Balanced watering is important, too. Regular watering is important for keeping the soil moist. Ensure that you distribute it evenly across the pepper patch or pot and it's not funneling to just one part of the soil. Moisture is key, but be careful not to overwater. "Mulching around the base of the plants can help retain moisture and suppress weeds.

## **Pepper Problems & How to Fix Them**

Peppers can run into a few issues while they're growing. These are the most common pests and diseases that can afflict your plants and how to deal with them.

### **Pests**

The most common pests that go after peppers, are aphids, flea beetles, and pepper maggots—the latter being fly larvae that specifically target peppers<sup>1</sup> by burrowing into the fruit. The best way to defend your plants is through frequent monitoring and using insecticidal soap or neem oil to combat infestations.

### **Plant Diseases**

There are a handful of diseases that peppers are capable of developing. These include bacterial leaf spot, powdery mildew, and phytophthora blight. While they may sound disastrous, preventing them is fairly straightforward. Focus on measures such as crop rotation, proper spacing, and avoiding overhead watering.

### **Harvesting Peppers**

As mentioned, peppers can take a couple of months to appear on your plant. It will depend on the pepper variety, but when the fruit has fully become its intended color and size and has a glossy sheen, they're likely ready to be plucked. If you're worried about pepper picking influencing the growth rate, regular harvesting can encourage your plant to produce more fruit.

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