

HOW TO GROW CHILLI PEPPERS

If you have a kick for hot and spicy dishes, why not grow your own chilli or cayenne peppers at home? Chilli peppers usually measure around 4-6 inches long and have a curved tip that is glossy red in color. The factors that affect their growth are adequate amount of light, moisture, heat and humidity. With a little patience and knowledge of the right growing conditions, it won't be a mission impossible in having your own supply of chilli peppers.

Step 1: Germinating Seed

A. Since chillis need good drainage, choose a potting mix that contains vermiculite or perlite. Good news is that since you are growing the chilli peppers indoors, it does not matter what time of year you plant them.

B. Sprinkle some chilli seeds to the soil in the seed starter cell. After that, cover the seeds with a think layer of extra potting soil or compost.

C. Keep the soil moist by watering the seeds to encourage germination.

D. Cover the seed starter to lock in both moisture and heat promoting seed germination. You can use an upside-down plastic bottle with the top cut off or wrap the pot with a clear plastic bag.

E. Place them in a location that is relatively dark with some filtered light usually in a shed or garage until they start to sprout. Ideal temperature range would be between 18-20°C.

F. When sprouts start to appear , you may take off the lid or plastic bag that is covering the pot and transfer them to a warm place that receives plenty of indirect light. If you do not have a sunny window, you may also use LED grow lights to help the plants grow.

Step 2: Transplanting Seedling

A. Chillies require replanting every now and then to encourage growth. Regularly check the growth of the leaves.

B. Prune the weaker seedlings using trimming scissors or by pinching it off with your fingers.

C. For the first transplant, place the chilli seedlings in a larger pot that is no bigger than 3 inches wide. As usual, fill the pot with rich, high-quality potting soil or organic compost.

D. Gently remove the seedling from the seed pot by squeezing the seed cell to loosen the roots and soil.

E. Place the seedling in the new pot that you prepared with soil. Add enough soil to cover the stem to just below the first set of leaves.



Step 3: Growing and Harvesting Chilli Peppers

A. Since chillis are usually grown in warm climates, maintain daytime temperature around 27 °C and evening temperature around 21°C by artificial methods such as installing artificial light 3 inches about the plant or place the plant on a heating mat.

B. Choose a bright and sunny location to place your chillis. It requires several hours of sunlight to keep it warm.

C. Maintain soil moisture by constant watering but do not overdo it as overwatering can lead to fungal growth and root rot and eventually affect the level of spiciness of the chilli peppers.

D. Twice a month provide a balanced fertilizer which is composed of equal amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium with some water. However, during winter season, the plant may slow down its growth so you may cut back on the frequency of fertilizer to about once a month.

E. Move the chilli peppers to a bigger pot once it outgrows its pot.

F. Time to harvest the chillis when they start to bear fruits usually after 3 months of the first transplant by cutting the stem above the fruit with a knife or scissors. Wear gloves to protect your hands from the spiciness of the chillis.

Add: 8451 No.5 RD Richmond BC V6Y 2V5, Richmond, BC, Canada, British Columbia

Phone number: +1 604-277-0871

Website: www.dajueartgarden.com

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