



Socio-Economic & Environmental Development Solutions

www.sendseedstoafrika.org

Please DO NOT use Genetically Modified Seeds(GM or GMO). Ask your seed provider and if they cannot give you written proof, do not buy the seed.

Try to save your own seed that you know is safe and you will get more money for your vegetables if they are organically grown, which means no pesticide use for the previous 5 years.

You can grow peppers in pots indoors to get them started or you may also plant them directly outside in warm weather.

Use a light weight soil and 2 inch (5 cm) pots for sowing the seeds. The pots will be large enough to allow some room for the seedlings to grow until it is time to plant.

Place 3 or 4 seeds in the dirt in the middle of each cup. Place the seeds about 1/4 inch (6 mm) deep. Once the seedlings come up, you will need to thin out the weaker seedlings and leave 1 seedling per cup.

Set the seedlings in direct sunlight. It is important that these seedlings get enough light to grow. You can always add a fluorescent light, if needed.

Water the seedlings as they grow. A light mist is a good way to water so you don't knock the seedlings over. You can also water from the bottom by submersing cups with a hole in the bottom in some shallow water. Be careful when watering that you do not disturb the soil in the cups.

Prepare the soil where you will be planting the sweet peppers outdoors by adding compost and loosening the soil. The soil should be well drained. If you are planting in a garden, you will want to till the soil to loosen it well. If you are planting in a garden pot, it should be at least 8 inches (20 cm) in diameter.

Transfer seedlings to the garden or to a garden pot in the full sun about 2 to 3 weeks after all danger of frost has past. Sweet pepper plants do not like cold weather.

Dig holes 18 to 24 inches (45 to 60 cm) apart in the garden. The holes should be large enough to accommodate the plant and all of the dirt that is around it.

Set the sweet pepper plant with its dirt in the hole. If the plant is in a peat pot, you can remove the top portion of the pot and plant the rest of the peat pot in the ground with the plant. If the plant is in any other type of pot, you will need to turn the plant over to remove the plant and dirt from the pot before setting it in the hole.

Pour some water in the hole with a watering can and pack the dirt around the plant.

Fertilize the sweet pepper plants with compost after planting and after the first fruits appear.

Water your sweet pepper plants any time there is a spell of dry weather.

Hoe around the plants to keep weeds away. Be careful and do not hoe too deeply, or you may cut into the roots.

Cut the sweet pepper fruit from the plant.

Harvest as soon as peppers reach desired size.

The longer bell peppers stay on the plant, the more sweet they become and the greater their Vitamin C content.

Use a sharp knife or scissors to cut peppers clean off the plant for the least damage.

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

Bell peppers can be dried, and we would recommend a conventional oven for the task. Wash, core, and seed the peppers. Cut into one-half-inch strips. Steam for about ten minutes, then spread on a baking sheet. Dry in the oven at 140 degrees F (or the lowest possible temperature) until brittle, stirring occasionally and switching tray positions. When the peppers are cool, put them in bags or storage containers. Peppers can also be roasted and saved in oil and put into jars. See canning section of this website.

Tips

If the weather turns cold, cover each sweet pepper plant to protect them until the temperatures rise.

If you prefer, you can purchase pepper plants from most gardening centers rather than starting them from seed.

Sweet peppers should mature in about 70 days from the time you first plant them.