

central area on the lower surface of the leaves. These can be prevented with good soil drainage at land preparation, but infected plants have to be removed and destroyed away from the plot.

Thrips, Aphids, White fly, leafhoppers, cutworms and mole cricket are some of the insect pests that affect sweet peppers.

Mites also prove to be a significant pest in fields that are affected by weed build up and other poor sanitation practices.

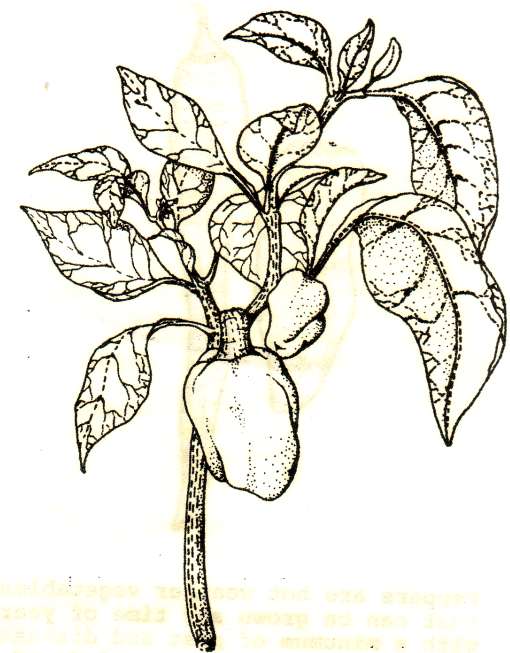
WEED CONTROL

Weed control is important from the beginning at land preparation. All efforts should be made to keep the fields weed-free, chemically or manually. Mulching can be used in the dry season

HARVESTING AND YIELDS

Sweet peppers are ready for harvesting 4½ - 5 months after planting. They are harvested when large but still immature.

GROWING SWEET PEPPERS SUCCESSFULLY





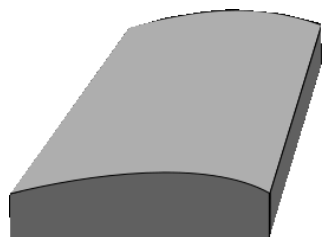
Sweet Peppers are hot weather vegetables that can be grown any time of the year with a minimum of pests and disease problems.

Sweet Peppers can be sown directly into the fields, but this is a crop that does best when it is first propagated and the seedlings planted out. Locally, peppers planted around June give the best results. Sweet Pepper takes about 4½ - 5 months from direct planting or from transplant to maturity.

SEEDLINGS

Pepper seedlings can be prepared using either seed boxes or seed beds.

1. If the seeds are not treated, dust them with Sevin to prevent destruction by ants and other soil pests.
2. Choose a site that is protected from the direct rain, sun for the entire day, and not too windy.
3. Mix well rotted pen manure in the soil and pre-



pare a cambered bed. For the seed boxes, mix the soil and place in the box. The soil can also be

treated for damping off (drench with 1tsp banrot per gallon water)

4. Take a dibble and mark rows of ¼inch depth into which the seeds are sown. Cover the seeds lightly with soil.
5. Water as often as possible but not to drown the seeds.

The seeds will germinate within 6 days to 2 weeks. When they attain the 3 leaf stage, thin them out 3 - 4 inches apart. Place the excess thinned-out seedlings into individual cells of the seedling trays or on another bed prepared for this. Ensure the soil in the seedlings trays is treated for damping-off etc.

Water daily but not too heavily. A foliar fertilizer can be used to enhance the performance of the seedlings. They are ready for transplanting within 4-5 weeks.

Peppers can also be planted directly into the field.

SOILS AND LAND PREPARATION

Peppers can be grown in all types of soil but do poorly if their roots are flooded. Sweet Peppers are planted on ridges in the wet season and in the furrows in the drier months. Prepare the site no more than 1 week before planting Direct planting often results in higher , earlier yields.

1. Plough the soil at depth 25-30 cm (10-12 inches).
2. If planting direct, see that all dirt clods are finely broken up and the surface is smooth.
3. Prepare ridges 3ft apart.
4. Add fertilizer before planting at 1oz NPK per plant.
5. Make holes 2ft apart and plant 2 –3 seeds per hole, ½ inch deep cover lightly with soil.

Germination will begin within 6 days –2 weeks.

TRANSPLANTING

The seedlings will be ready for transplanting within 4-5

weeks after germination. Transplant in the early mornings or late afternoons.

1. If in seedling trays, transplant the seedlings to the planting site
2. Wet the trays or the seed beds with water to moisten soil and prevent damage to the plant.
3. Hold the seedlings gently by the stem and pry out with a dibble. Ensure the roots are intact with soil around.
4. Place the seedling in holes prepared (BR 3ft, WR 2ft) and firm up with soil now more than half way up the stem of the seedling to allow the plant to stand upright.
5. Water the field, but not too heavily.

Flowering begins within 6 weeks.

CARE AND MANAGEMENT

FERTILIZING

1. at 1week after transplanting or planting, add NPK at 1oz per plant in a band about 2 inches away from the stem.
2. 2 weeks later, add 2oz per plant
3. At 4 weeks later, add 2 oz per plant
4. At 9 weeks after and onwards, add 1oz per plant.

A foliar fertilizer, eg Miracle Gro or Calmax can be used at 3 weeks interval.

PEST AND DISEASES

Viruses are the most serious diseases of peppers. Symptoms include twisting and stunted growth of the plant

Bacterial wilt is also common. The lower leaves of the plant turn yellow and wilt.

Bacterial leafspot also affects peppers. In the wet season, severe infections can drastically reduce quality and marketable yields. This shows up as small spots with sunken