



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Garden Peppers

Capsicum species

DESCRIPTION: Pepper species are native to the Americas, where they have been cultivated for thousands of years by the people of the tropical Americas, and are now cultivated worldwide. Some of the species of *Capsicum* are used as spices, vegetables, medicines, and ornamental plants. The fruit of *most* contains capsaicin, a chemical that can produce a strong burning sensation in the mouth of the unaccustomed eater. Most mammals find this unpleasant, whereas birds are unaffected. There are approximately 20–27 species of Peppers, five of which are domesticated. Many varieties of the same species can be used in many different ways; for example, *Capsicum annuum* includes the "bell pepper" variety, which is sold in both its immature green state and its red, yellow or orange ripe state. This same species has other varieties as well, such as the Anaheim chiles often used for stuffing, the dried ancho chile used to make chili powder, the mild-to-hot jalapeño, and the smoked, ripe jalapeño, known as a chipotle. Peppers will bear throughout the summer as long as the fruits are picked regularly as soon as they're large enough.

RECOMMENDED USE: Use in a patio bed or container, or to attract wildlife.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Peppers need about the same care as tomatoes, but they are even more vulnerable to cold. They are usually grown as warm season annuals.



Sun tolerance: They can tolerate full sun, but thrive in dappled light in our heat.



Watering and feeding: Moderate water for best growth. However, don't over water; by keeping the soil a bit on the dry side, bushier and more compact plants will form. Take care, when fertilizing, that it doesn't contain too much nitrogen; this will cause the plants to form a lot of foliage at the expense of the fruits.



Soil requirements: They need to be grown in soil that will not dry out quickly and is supplied with plenty of organic matter. When planting in pots, they should have porous, well-drained soil.



Pruning: The plants usually don't need pinching, but if any shoots seem to stray, they may be pinched.