



# Harpers

NURSERIES & FLOWER SHOPS

## Peppers

Most of the peppers grown here are of the capsicum species, Habanero is a Chinese specie.

Peppers in the capsicum species belong to the solanaceae (night shade) family and are closely related to eggplant, potato, petunia, tomato and tobacco. We grow them as vegetables but botanically speaking, they are berries.

Peppers are commonly divided into two groups: pungent and non-pungent, also called hot and sweet.

Peppers need a rich organic type soil to do well and respond to fertilizer as well as top mulching. They need ample moisture and should not be stressed for moisture as they need to grow fast and develop fruit by May or June. The hot weather of late June, July, August and September beats on them and production slows way down until October, November and early December, when fall production increases.

Due to our long hot summers, it is necessary to get your soil ready early (see our Soil Preparation Guide) so that your peppers can be planted as soon after frost leaves in the in the spring as possible. You will need to keep them well fertilized and watered to get your peppers off to a good fast start.

As the weather warms, the addition of 2" to 4" of compost to the top of the soil will extend the fruiting cycle longer into the heat of summer. Along with the mulching of your plants, continued good fertilizing and watering practices will keep your peppers going until the cooler fall evenings come and your plant revitalizes and comes back into production until frost.

Even though we do not have the same conditions for growing peppers here, that they have in southeastern Arizona or Las Cruces, New Mexico, we can still grow some nice peppers. Our long green chili peppers and Bell peppers usually are not as long or large as those grown there, however, the flavor is still quite good and some varieties do just as well.

Harper's is adding peppers varieties to our list every year, ask us for recommendations.

**Fertilizing:** Refer to our 'Garden Preparation' guide for the pre plant fertilizing of peppers. After the peppers are planted you have two options for fertilizing, through out the growing season:

1. *Fertilome 20-20-20 Soluble plant food.* 1 tablespoon per gallon of water in a sprinkler can or hose and sprayer. Wet each plant thoroughly, apply every 7 to 10 days after watering your plants, or
2. *Use Grow-Pro 10-10-10 granular fertilizer* at the rate of 2 cups to each 10' X 10' area every 30 days after watering your plants and then water it in again.

