

# Horticulture Hints

April 2010

## Producing Peppers

If you want to spice up your garden this year, the world is full of a variety of peppers, whether sweet or hot. They come in a huge array of colors and shapes and can be used as bedding plants for landscape beds with their colorful fruits.

Bell peppers and many hot peppers are native to Central and North America. A wide range of hot pepper varieties are also native to Asia, most notably Thailand and China.

As with most vegetables, peppers require full sun and prefer good composted soil. They prefer warm temperatures before planting. If you place them outside too early, they will not flourish. They like evenly moist soils and at least one inch of water a week during the summer. Mulching helps keep the soil evenly moist.

Bell peppers start out green, and then change as they mature. Some popular green bells are Big Bertha and Keystone, which turn red when mature. There are yellow, orange and purple varieties as well. Planting different varieties brings lots of color to your salad or vegetable trays.

Hot peppers come in all sizes and colors with different degrees of hotness. The degree of hotness, or the comparative capsaicin level, can be measured on the Scoville Scale.

*Type: Scoville Units*

Pure capsaicin: 15,000,000

Police chili spray: 5,000,000

Habanero chili: 100,000-300,000

Thai pepper: 50,000 – 100,000

Cayenne pepper: 30,000 – 50,000

Jalapeno pepper: 2,000-8,000

Anaheim pepper: 500-2,000

Bell pepper: 0

The habanero is very hot compared to a jalapeno, so be cautious when planting, and pick a variety that produces the amount of hotness you prefer. You may worry that your sweet peppers will be hot when planted too close to your hot peppers. This will not affect your peppers unless you use the seed for next year's crop.

When you pick your peppers, use a knife to remove the fruit; if you pull it too hard, it may remove the entire branch. Use gloves and be very careful to not touch your eyes while harvesting.

Ornamental peppers can add lots of color to the flower bed as well, including a beautiful variety called Black Pearl. They have dark cherry-sized fruit that matures to a very colorful red, and they do well in our Kansas heat.

There are many other varieties to choose from that offer a great addition to containers or annual beds. Peppers are easy to grow; just be cautious to wait until the temperatures are right. Experiment with different colors and types to make your salad colorful or your annual beds beautiful. ❁

10% OFF  
DIY LAWN  
FERTILIZER PROGRAM

Through April

Purchase and take home the entire 5-step Fertilome lawn program, and receive 10% off regular retail price.

### What to do in April

- Plant: trees, shrubs, perennials, cole crops, pansies, snapdragons & petunias
- Prune overgrown Junipers and Yews
- Spray Apple and Crabapple trees for cedar apple rust
- Check pines for disease
- Prune, uncover, fertilize and plant roses in early to mid-April
- Seed or sod cool season grass
- Fertilize perennials



## Nancy's Notebook

The storefront is filling up with plants daily now, and we are so happy to see spring finally here at the nursery.

Many people wonder why we don't have our container plants out earlier and worry they are not hardy enough to withstand cold temperatures.

However, once planted in the ground, the plants have plenty of insulation from the top soil and will do great. We keep them in the poly houses a little later due to the threat of cold temperatures into April.

When a plant is in a container and is set outside in the open, you have an unprotected root system, and cold temperatures can damage the plants. This is why we never recommend you leave a planted container outside to overwinter.

Sometimes a flush of leaves has been forced on plant material in the poly houses, so we may hold back bringing those out to the garden center as well just to protect the foliage.

When freezing temperatures happen, it is important to cover your annuals that are not cold hardy. This includes vegetables like tomatoes and peppers and flowers. Cover them when there is a frost forecasted; do not use plastic, always use cloth.

We have a new product called FreezePruf, which can be sprayed on the plant when temperatures are above 50 degrees, eight to 12 hours before a frost event, and it will protect the plant for four to six weeks from cold temperatures. This product has an orbital sprayer, which makes it easier to reach underneath the foliage of your plant.

We also have frost cloths and hot caps available for easy coverage of plant material to protect against freezes.

Another bit of information; our average frost free day in Manhattan is April 15, and our frost free day is May 5.

Don't forget our annual Geranium Sale April 9 – 10! We will have a variety of colors of seed geraniums to choose from.

Ten percent of our proceeds from the weekend will be donated to breast cancer research, and anything pink is 10% off. Hope to see everyone there!! ❁

# GERANIUM SALE

**Friday & Saturday, April 9 & 10**

All day: 8am-5pm

FREE snacks and drinks

Everything pink in the store is 10% off.

10% of the weekend's proceeds will be donated to breast cancer research.

