

## Peppers

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There are many varieties of peppers, including colors, shapes, and flavors, including hot or sweet. Think about what your family will use them for before choosing the one that is right for your garden.

### Planting

- Peppers are best planted from transplants. To start transplants, plant seeds at a depth of 1/4 inch 6 to 8 weeks before desired planting date.
- If purchasing transplants, look for plants 6 to 10 inches tall.
- Pepper transplants should be planted between May 20 and June 15, May 10 and July 1, and May 1 and July 15 in eastern, central, and western Kentucky.
- Transplants should be spaced 12 to 18 inches apart.

### Care and Harvest

- Wide plant spacing leaves rooms for weeds to establish, so make sure the bed is weed free when you plant and weed regularly.
- Water about 1 inch per week (including rain). Take special care to provide water after flowering starts.
- A starter fertilizer can be used when transplanting, and supplemental fertilizer can be give after fruit has set.
- Peppers are ready for harvest 65-75 days after the seeds were planted.
- Harvest when the peppers are firm.
- Harvesting some peppers while they are green will enable the plant to continue flowering and producing.
- They can be harvested green, or after turning red, orange, or yellow. These peppers will be sweeter, but may become over ripe quickly if not picked.
- Cut peppers from the plant to avoid injury and leave a short piece of stem on the pepper.



## Storage and Use

- Peppers stored in the refrigerator in plastic bags will keep for 2 to 3 weeks.
- Peppers can be frozen after a 3 min water blanch or a 5 min steam blanch for halves or 2 min water blanch or a 3 min steam blanch for rings.
- Un-pickled peppers should be canned using the hot pack method with 1 inch of head spaced and processed for 35 min using pressure canning at 10 pounds of pressure.
- Peppers should not be canned in quarts.
- Pickled peppers can be canned using the water bath method. Follow pickling instructions for processing times.
- Pepper skins can get touch when canned. It can be removed placing cut peppers skin side down in a medium heat pan. The skin will blister and can be removed once cooled.



## References

Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky. ID-128. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

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## RECIPE

### Roasted Red Pepper Dip

*By Martha Stewart*

**Preheat oven to 450°F. Place:**

- 6 large red bell peppers

**Cut side up on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil. Roast until flesh is tender and skin blisters in spots, about 35 min.**

**OR**

**Roast peppers over a gas burner, turning until charred all over, about 10 min.**

**Let stand until cool enough to handle, then peel and seed peppers.**

**Pulse peppers in a food processor until coarsely chopped. Add:**

- 1 cup golden raisins, coarsely copped
- 3 tablespoons salt-packed capers, rinsed well and drained
- 1 ½ teaspoons coarsely chopped fresh oregano

**Pulse to combine. Season with:**

- Salt
- Red wine vinegar

*Makes 3 cups/ 12 servings.*