



Tips for propagating pepper & chilli varieties

Before sowing

Start early enough with the cultivation. The season is short in our latitudes and some varieties of chilli will otherwise not ripen. Start growing the plants approx. 7-8 weeks before the date you have set for transplanting them outdoors. If you want to plant the plants outdoors in May, March is a good time to sow the seeds. Rocotos can be sown as early as December.

Chilli and pepper seeds need a lot of warmth! Sowing in a small propagator is favourable. The temperature here is usually high enough and the humidity ideal. For some tropical varieties, it is also advisable to use a heating mat to warm the soil, as the temperature should be a constant 25-30°C.

The substrate must be sterile and contain no fertiliser, as this promotes root formation in the seedlings (fertiliser burns the roots!). Prepare a suitable planting container before sowing. Caution: Coconut substrate binds water very well. Even if the surface has already dried, it is still moist inside. Therefore, check before watering again, otherwise the moisture will damage the seeds! Make sure that the containers/pots have drainage holes and that no waterlogging can occur.

To overcome seed dormancy, the seeds need water, only then will the dormant seedling "wake up" and manage to break through the seed coat. Overnight pre-soaking helps here. Wrap the seeds in damp kitchen paper and place them in a bag or container with a lid (otherwise they will dry out).

Be patient! If your seeds don't germinate immediately, don't give up too quickly. Some varieties take a very long time to germinate. A germination period of 5-20 days can be quite normal. With the tips mentioned above, the time can be reduced to 3-5 days for many seeds.

Sowing

Now cover the seeds only lightly with the selected substrate in a suitable planting container. If the seeds are too deep, it will take longer for the seedling to come through the soil surface or it may not make it at all! Make sure that the temperatures are right. Ideal temperatures for growing are 25-30°C during the day and approx. 20°C at night.

Make sure there is enough light. Too much is hardly possible. If you do not have a sunny location, you will need a plant lamp. This is especially true if you start early in the year and the day is short and there is not much light in the flat due to cloudy weather.

Pay attention to the humidity. As seeds and seedlings, chilli requires even moisture, but not waterlogging, as this is more likely to cause the seeds to rot than to accelerate germination. The seeds and seedlings must never be allowed to dry out completely. The greenhouse with its greenhouse effect ensures that the soil does not dry out too quickly. As soon as the seeds have germinated, you should open the ventilation of the greenhouse or occasionally remove the lid briefly for ventilation. On the one hand, this hardens the seedlings and, on the other hand, it prevents the dreaded "fall-over disease". This

is caused by a fungus that is favoured by a warm and humid climate (so always clean used containers well for the next season!). You should repot the seedlings in their own pots with a diameter of approx. 8 cm as soon as possible. The seedlings can be planted outdoors as soon as they are strong enough and the external conditions are right.

The requirements and preparations

Transplanting in early to mid-April is not really advisable in our latitudes, early or mid-May (after the Ice Saints) is safer. The lowest temperature that can be tolerated is around 12°C. The ideal time to transplant is on a slightly cloudy day or in the afternoon, as the sun is not too strong then. Water the plants in the pots a few hours before transplanting.

Your houseplants are not yet used to the sun and can get sunburnt. Therefore, acclimatise them slowly and gradually to the sun and temperatures!

The ideal location

The ideal location for chillies is the warmest and sunniest place in the garden. Here you need to ensure good watering, as the plants evaporate a lot of water! If you want to plant the plants in a warmer region, you should make sure that the plants are in the shade in the afternoon if possible.

Transplanting

Dig a hole about twice as big as you need for your plant. Mix the excavated soil with compost or other well-rotted material and backfill the hole with this mixture. The soil mixture will provide your chilli plant with a good starting base for the first few weeks. Now dig a second hole from the mixed soil and plant the chilli plant in it. This should only be slightly larger than the root ball of your plant. Water well afterwards.

The planting distances outdoors will of course depend on the expected size of the plant. In general, however, a distance of 40-60 cm between the plants and a distance of 40-90 cm between the rows is a good guideline for most chilli varieties. Tubs should be at least 10 litres in size, or 25 litres for Rocotos.

All varieties are also very suitable for pot cultivation. Here it is particularly important to water sufficiently and fertilise regularly (every fortnight) to ensure strong plants and a good yield. Signs of deficiency can be quickly recognised, e. g. the leaves of Habañero varieties are no longer smooth and flat, but start to curl and become wavy.

The harvest

Don't wait too long to harvest. Always pick your chillies as soon as they have reached their final colour. Otherwise there is a risk that thick-fleshed varieties will become mushy or thin-walled varieties will dry on the plant. Yields are also significantly better with regular and early harvesting, as the plants are stimulated to produce new fruits.

Harvesting the seeds

It's very easy: simply pull them out and dry them. Always wear gloves when handling chillies! Store the seeds in a dry, dark and cool place. They remain germinable for 3-4 years.



**Please bring your harvested seeds back to us.
Help us to preserve our cultural heritage.**



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