

10 Quick Pepper Gardening Tips From Juan

Planning - - If you are starting plants from seed, buy the seed in January from reliable sources to avoid shortages and back orders. Plant Peppers 8 weeks and Tomatoes 6 weeks before target garden planting dates (Midwest Zone 5 is May 5-10 for Tomatoes and May 15-20 for Peppers)

Composting - - All season long, put everything you can in the garden for fall or spring tilling; grass clippings, compost, fine wood chips etc... the more material you can get in the garden the better.

Soil Testing - - Be sure to have your soil tested through your local Extension Service or Ag University. Knowledge is our best tool to success in the garden.

Impatience - - Don't try to plant too early.

If you buy bigger, older, more expensive plants and get them in the garden a couple of weeks early, not only do you risk weather damage but even if everything goes well, you may harvest a pepper or a tomato only a few days earlier than plants planted under normal procedure.

Variety Choices - - Know what you are going to do with your produce. What will you cook, where will you sell it or give it away and what does your target market want to use and eat? Choose varieties that make sense. Do you need peppers for sauce or salsa? Big difference (see varieties below or in the Pepper Academy for explanation).



Irrigation: Peppers especially do very well with consistent water and under conditions where the plants are not subject to fungus infected soil splashing up on them with the rain. Using drip tape and plastic puts your plants in a controlled and more likely to be successful environment, especially in a dry year like this (Zone 5 / Iowa).



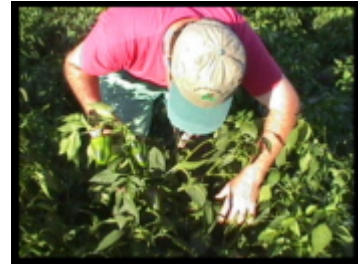
Spacing While Planting / Mapping: Space your plants with easy harvesting and growing environment in mind. Don't try to put too many plants in your space, or you may pay a price with no/low production. Pepper plants need to breath, especially in a wet year. I recommend spacing plants over two plus feet apart in the row and rows at least four plus feet apart.

“Varmints:” Varmints, especially rabbits, love to eat tender young pepper seedlings. Chicken wire at least two feet tall works best. Take the fence down and save it for next year, after the plants are a foot tall or so.

Newspaper and Straw: In a smaller non-irrigated environment, you may want to use newspaper and straw to keep weeds out, moisture in the soil and fungus infected soil from splashing on your plants. After your plants are a foot tall and really growing well, weed the garden, lay two

sheets of newspaper everywhere and put a light layer of compost, straw, hay, mulch, really anything to hold the newspaper down. Wet the job with water to keep it in place until it rains. Till the newspaper and straw right in the soil in the fall or spring. This works!

Pick Early and Often: Peppers proliferate and rebloom if managed with early picking. Pick a few of the small peppers off of your plants while still immature to allow the plants to get bigger and framier, and promote new blooming on the plant. You may double your per plant production.



Pick early and often

Please try our salsa and sauce products in our Storefront. These products are great tasting, make great gifts and are the fruits of our horticultural enterprise, The Pepper Farm.

Have a great Holiday Season!

Sean Sullivan



Every pepper farmer dreams of a year like 2000

Seed Supplier Addresses

Code Supplier Address

PG Pepper Gal P O Box 23006 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307-3006

H Harris P O Box 22960 Rochester, NY 14692-2960

T&M Thompson & Morgan P O Box 1308, Jackson, NJ 08527-0308

SH Shepard's 30 Irene Street, Torrington, CT 06790-6658

