

# Ornamental Peppers

Ornamental pepper plants are dwarf pepper plants with more colorful fruits and foliage than the standard hot pepper varieties. They are ideal as houseplants because of their small size and easy growth habits. Although you could grow these plants indoors at any time of year, they are particularly popular as a way to bring some color inside during the winter.

Ornamental peppers come in all shape and sizes from variegated leaves to purple leaves. Peppers can range from red, orange, yellow, or even purple fruit. Their vibrant color lends them to landscape uses as well in planting beds with garden mums, fall pansies, ornamental cabbage and kale. Add them to window boxes and planters with fall blooming annuals and grasses.

Fertilize when planting. You can also fertilize lightly with a low-nitrogen fertilizer (marked with 5-10-10 or similar ratio) once a month, but this is not necessary after the pepper fruits start to form.

Keep inside once temperatures fall below 40 degrees F. It is also important to note that you should avoid exposing peppers to frost. Bring them into your garage or home overnight if frost is forecasted. Ornamental pepper plants will remain small enough to make good indoor plants. Place in a sunny window or provide supplemental lighting. This will help the plant to produce more blooms and thus more peppers.

Choose a location that is high enough to be out of the reach of pets and small children. Ornamental peppers are very spicy and their oils can cause eye irritation.

Water your ornamental pepper plant daily, but make sure that the soil is not oversaturated. Make sure that your pepper pot has good drainage.

Pinch new growth to keep your plant compact and encourage new growth. Ornamental pepper plants are naturally small, but this will help to keep them at their best.

Pick fruits for decoration or allow to dry on the plant.