Most Used Hot Pepper Varieties

The pepper genus is Capsicum meaning to “to bite”. Of the Jalapeno varieties, the University of Florida recommends Early Jalapeno and Jalapeno M. Early Jalapeno is a heavy-yielding pepper with a very long producing season that begins in approximately 66 days. Dark green, smooth skin reveals the much-loved hot pepper taste. Jalapeno M is a pepper that consistently delivers 4,500 Scoville units of heat in a 3-1/2 inch pepper. The most common pepper used in nachos and chopped in Mexican sauces. Harvest in 73 days.

Specialty Hot Pepper Varieties

The recommended varieties of super-hot peppers for this area are Cherry Bomb, Hungarian Hot Wax, Big Chile II, Numex, Ancho, Thai, Anaheim Chile, Long Cayenne, Habanero and Caribbean Red Habanero

Warning! Habaneros average 259,000 Scovilles; Caribbean Reds are a little over 445,000 Scovilles, compared to Jalapenos that average between 2,500 to 10,000 Scoville Units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoville Units</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16,000,000</td>
<td>Pure Capsaicin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350,000 to 500,000+</td>
<td>Red Savina Habanero</td>
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<tr>
<td>100,000 to 350,000</td>
<td>Scotch Bonnet, Habanero</td>
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<tr>
<td>50,000 to 100,000</td>
<td>Thai, Chiltepin</td>
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<tr>
<td>30,000 to 50,000</td>
<td>Cayenne, Tabasco, Piquin</td>
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<tr>
<td>5,000 to 20,000</td>
<td>Chipotle, Serrano</td>
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<tr>
<td>2,500 to 5,000</td>
<td>Jalapeno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 to 2,000</td>
<td>Ancho, Poblano, Espanola</td>
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<tr>
<td>500 to 1000</td>
<td>New Mexico, Anheiem</td>
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<td>100 to 500</td>
<td>Pepperocini</td>
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<td>0 to 100</td>
<td>Bell, Banana</td>
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The Scoville scale is a measurement of the spicy heat of a chili pepper according to its capsaicin content. Capsaicin is a chemical compound that stimulates chemoreceptor nerve endings in the skin, especially the mucous membranes. The number of Scoville heat units (SHU) indicates the amount of capsaicin present. The scale is named after its creator, American chemist Wilbur Scoville in 1912.

Cherry Bomb is a 1-3/4 inch by 1-3/4 inch pepper that turns from green to red and harvests in about 60 days. Commonly used for pickled and stuffed peppers.

Hungarian Hot Wax is an 8 inch long yellow tapering pepper that turns red when mature. Harvests in about 70 days.

Big Chile II is a 68 day harvesting pepper that produces massive 10 inch long, tapered peppers. Fruits turn from yellow to red at maturity. They are most commonly used when green and often used for Chili Relleno.

Numex is a style of pepper that was bred from Habaneros; many to have all of the flavor, but less of the heat of a typical Habanero pepper.

Ancho is a 4" pepper that is a deep green color, maturing to a deep red. When dried, this pepper is called Ancho; when fresh is called Pablano. Harvest in about 65 days.

Thai is an 18" tall and wide mounded plant with bright green foliage and beautiful, small red peppers in about 40 days. A beautiful addition to any garden even without the benefits of being edible.

Anaheim Chile is an 80 day harvesting pepper that produces fruit from 6 to 8-1/2 inches long, tapering from 1-3/4 inches wide at the base.

Long Cayenne are the typical, long, thin, red cayenne peppers used in many spicy dishes. Harvested when red and hanged to dry, these peppers are harvested in 70 days.

Habanero and Caribbean Red Habanero are some of the hottest peppers known to man. Caribbean Red Habaneros are a refined variety of Habanero that was bred to be hotter than its namesake. These peppers are almost twice as hot as the original!

**Planting Dates for North Florida:** August 15 / February - March

**Planting Information:**
Cold Protection: Hot Pepper sustains chilling injury when temperatures drop 2 °F below freezing. Therefore growers must make arrangements for freeze protection of pepper from November through March. Frost cloth can be used to keep frost off the plants.

Target pH of soil: 6.0 - 6.5

Fertilizer: Use a slow release, complete fertilizer (contains N, P, & K) with minor or micro elements/nutrients. Follow label directions. Go easy on the nitrogen 5-10-5.

Irrigation: Drip irrigation systems are generally used for pepper production. Generally one drip irrigation tubing per bed provides adequate water for plants, although a second is beneficial especially while the plants' root systems are small. Water requirements for young plants are very low. Irrigation frequencies of once or twice per week suffice for most plastic mulched young plants.

Insect Management: The major pests of pepper are the pepper weevil, beet armyworm, aphids, tomato fruitworm, looper, and melon thrips. Preventive sprays are required against the pepper weevil, since by the time infested fruit begin to drop, many fruit are already infested. The flowers should be checked for the presence of the melon thrips, and if they are present sprays should be applied without delay. Most insects can be controlled with insecticidal soaps, ultra fine horticultural oils, Bt 'Kurstaki" (Bacillus thuringensis ‘Kurstaki”)

Disease Management:
Major diseases include bacterial spot, phytophora root rot, powdery mildew, anthracnose, pythium diseases and mosaic viruses. Select disease resistant cultivars. Avoid overhead irrigation especially in the late afternoon or evening. Keep area free of leaf litter and weeds. Use bactericides and fungicides if necessary
Weed Management: Remove mechanically by hoeing or pulling. Use mulch to reduce weed growth in plant beds and in between rows.

Multiple Cropping/Rotation: There is risk in rotating peppers with cucurbits because of Phytophthora blight. This disease is caused by *Phytophthora capsici*, which develops explosively in moist conditions and produces large numbers of infective sporangia. The disease is very damaging and difficult to control.

Harvest: The harvest season extends from November into April. All peppers are picked by hand.

Caution: Wear rubber gloves when handling hot peppers or wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face.

Happy Gardening,

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