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BAILEYS

Baileys guide to HOME GROWN **CHILLIES**



PLANTING



FEEDING



HARVEST

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BUNNINGS
warehouse

A handy guide to successfully growing
your own chillies in Western Australia
with Neville Passmore

Baileys guide to HOME GROWN CHILLIES



With origins in the northern parts of South America, chillies are well suited to summer conditions in Perth. The fruits seem to have found a place in just about every cuisine and there are thousands of varieties from which to choose. There are a small number of staple varieties however that are easy to find and these can get you started on the chilli odyssey, if this is where you are heading. The heat varies from sweet nothing through to incendiary.

Growth and fruiting slow down in winter to the point where some cold sensitive varieties can die. This is not a serious problem as chilli is treated as an annual in most of the world so it's off to the nursery to get a new one. In Perth it is possible to keep all varieties for more than a year, with careful treatment of the more sensitive types.

Planting

The best time to germinate seeds is in late spring around October or even November. Plant out seedlings from November on.

Most chillies grow best in slightly limey soil; however, they are very tolerant of different soil types. Add **Baileys Soil Improver Plus** to sand so that it makes up a third of the volume of the soil you dig out of the planting hole. While chilli will grow in full sun it's a good idea to give it some protection through our blazing summers. Growing in pots is a great way to go. Single plants are best in a 200mm pot where two or three can be grown in a 30cm diameter tub. **Baileys Premium Potting Mix** is formulated for WA conditions and is my recommendation for growing all vegetables and herbs including chillies.



Feeding

Feeding regularly is the best way to get plants to fruit. Controlled release fertilisers take the guess work out of the process and **Baileys Garden and Shrub Plant Food** is ideal for this job as it has a 3 to 4 month release mechanism. This can be used both for in ground growing as well as pots. Remember, if you have used Baileys Premium Potting Mix it already contains a controlled release food so wait for a season before applying top-up feeding.

Harvest

Fruiting occurs after flowering and this normally starts in November. Fruit form through the hot months and the more you harvest the more fruit comes along to take their place. Most varieties present green fruit first, and then with further ripening change to their mature colour which can vary from green through, yellow, red, orange, purple, brown and black. Chillies can be picked at the green under ripe stage right through to when they start to dry out on the plant.

Fruit colour is no measure of heat. The most reliable method is try it and see. Should the heat be too much for you then rather than drinking water, which does nothing to quench the fire, look to milk, yoghurt, ice cream or vegetable oil. I have found that a raw sweet capsicum can also be a rescue package.



Did you know?

A Scoville heat unit measure has been developed to give some numbers to the hotness of chillies. On this scale sweet capsicum is zero and the Jalapeño comes in at about 3,500 to 8,000 units, which at first looks pretty impressive. I can manage to eat Habanero which rates as 100,000 to 350,000 units. To me a Habanero feels a bit like a punch in the mouth. I can't quite imagine getting the current world record holder onto my tongue. The Guinness Book of Records has bestowed the title on the 'Carolina Reaper' with a Scoville count of between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000 units. That's just plain scary!