

Capsicum annuum Ornamental Pepper¹

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Introduction

Ornamental peppers reach 10 to 20 inches in height and are grown as annuals or pot plants, producing colorful fruits from May until frost. In warmer climates, ornamental peppers are perennial and one of the best bedding plants for hot weather conditions, performing beautifully as a ground cover in mixed flower borders, as an edging, or in containers. Even though they can be perennial in USDA hardiness zones 9b, 10, and 11, plants are usually changed out at the end of the season. Fruits are available in a wide range of colors, from red, purple, yellow, orange, or white. Several colors are often seen at the same time on plants as the fruits ripen and change color. While the peppers are said to be edible, most palates will find them much too hot.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Capsicum annuum*: Ornamental Pepper
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—*Capsicum annuum*: Ornamental Pepper
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Figure 3. Fruit—*Capsicum annuum*: Ornamental Pepper
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General Information

Scientific name: *Capsicum annuum*

Pronunciation: KAP-sick-um AN-yoo-um

Common name(s): ornamental pepper, bush red pepper

Family: *Solanaceae*

Plant type: annual

USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Figure 4)

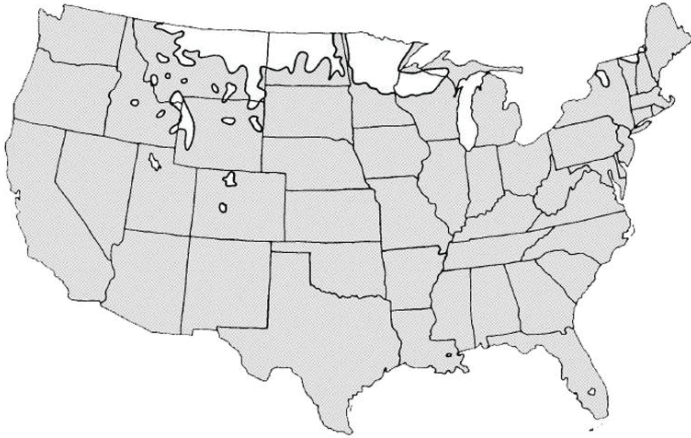


Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Credits: undefined

Planting month for zone 7: Jun; Jul

Planting month for zone 8: May; Jun

Planting month for zone 9: Mar; Apr; May; Sep; Oct

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Feb; Mar; Apr; May; Oct; Nov; Dec

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: container or above-ground planter; mass planting; border

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 1½ feet

Spread: 1 to 1½ feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: bowed

Leaf type and persistence: not applicable

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: not applicable

Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: orange; white; yellow

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: not applicable

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Ornamental peppers will grow quite easily in full sun or partial shade and do best in a fairly rich and evenly moist growing medium. They can be planted on 12 to 18 inch centers to form a solid mass of colorful fruits.

Propagation is by seed, which should not be covered with soil.

There are many cultivars for fruit size and color.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern except for occasional leaf-chewing insects.