PLANT FACT SHEET

Capsicum annuum L.

GENUS *Capsicum* **FAMILY** Solanaceae

COMMON NAMES Capsicum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Herb, Spice, Vegetable

The fruit are edible raw or cooked. They are stuffed, roasted, fried, preserved and use as flavouring.
The leaves are edible cooked.

DESCRIPTION

An annual plant up to 1.5 m high. The leaves can be long and sword shaped or oval to rounded. The leaves can be 12 cm long. The flowers are produced singly, and are yellow or white. They are bell shaped. The flowers are 1.5 cm across and in the axils of leaves. Fruit are about 10 cm long and 6 cm wide and red when fully ripe. They are hollow. They contain many seeds. Kinds with different shaped fruit also occur.

HABITAT

A tropical or subtropical plant. Plants grow from sea level up to about 2400 m altitude. They are killed by frost. Soils need to be well drained and fertile. The fruit and plants can rot in the middle of the wettest seasons. They need a temperature above 4°C. A night temperature of 16-18°C and a day temperature of 26-28°C is best. A pH of 5.4-6.9 is suitable. They suit plant hardiness zones 8-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Both self and cross pollination occur. It is possible to save your own seed. Seed will keep for 2 to 3 years. Seeds germinate in 6 - 10 days. Plants can be transplanted. Plants need to be about 50 cm apart. About 50% of flowers set fruit.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The first fruit can be harvested after 3-4 months.

NOTES

There are 10 Capsicum species.
The various Capsicum annuum varieties may be synonyms of Capsicum annuum.
It possibly has anti-cancer properties.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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