



# Gardens Across Iowa!

A coalition of businesses spearheading a global humanitarian movement.

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January 26

## Prepare to germinate hot and/or bell peppers!

Two weeks from now, on February 9, it will be time to begin germinating peppers indoors!

Be sure to order the following supplies, and prepare a place near a south-facing windowsill to keep them:

- Seeds
- Small paper cups
- Heating pad

Feb 9

## Germinate Hot and Bell Peppers Indoors

**When** - Both bell and hot peppers need to be germinated 8 to 10 weeks before the last spring frost date.<sup>1 2</sup> In Iowa, where our frost date is around April 20, Feb. 9 is an ideal day to begin germinating peppers indoors. You can, however, begin germinating anytime between Feb. 9 and the 23rd.

**How** - Germination is achieved at 77° to 90° Fahrenheit. To achieve these sorts of temperatures, use a heated propagator or heat mat. Ideal conditions are achieved within about two weeks, but some varieties take as long as 4 weeks to germinate. Do not transplant them too soon! Choose a potting mix that easily drains.

May 1

## Time to harden your pepper plants and prepare the soil

Ten days from now, on May 11, it will be time to transplant your young pepper plants into the garden.

Now is the time to harden them, as peppers are very sensitive to cool temperatures. It is also time to prepare the soil so it is ready to transplant.

**How to harden young pepper plants** - On day one, place the plants outdoors for one hour, but not in direct sunlight. Increase the time outdoors each day, allowing them more and more sunlight. After a few days of hardening, feel free to leave them outdoors. When you put them into extreme conditions with hard frost, they will be ready to transplant.

May 11

## Transplant Peppers into the Garden:

**Fun fact:** Green and red bell peppers are actually the same pepper; the red bell peppers have just been allowed to mature on the plant longer, which changes their color and lets them develop a higher Vitamin C content. More mature peppers also tend to be sweeter than their greener counterparts.

**When to transplant** - transplant outdoors 2 to 3 weeks after the threat of frost has passed (MAY 11).  
When you transplant seedlings, be sure to water them well.

## References:

Almanac.com Editors. "Bell Peppers." Almanac.com:  
<https://www.almanac.com/plant/bell-peppers>.

Niki Jabbour. "Growing Hot Peppers in Garden Beds and Containers." Savvy Gardening, 25 July 2019: <https://savvygardening.com/growing-hot-peppers/>.