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How to germinate Chilli Seeds

Mark Peacock B.Hort Sc (Hons 1st Class)

Seed treatment Protocol:

1. Soak seeds in a 0.05% Sodium Hypochlorite solution for 30 minutes. The best product for this is Milton (in a blue bottle in the supermarket with the baby stuff. It is used for sterilising baby bottles etc.)
2. Dry seeds on paper towel and sow immediately at a depth of less than 1cm.
3. Mix up a pre-emergent fungicide at label rate and apply to growing media. (Fongarid-it is systemic and will protect the seedling as it develops)
4. Keep the seeds moist at 28 degrees until germination. It is also important to keep media well ventilated to prevent anoxic bacteria and fungi from colonising the seed.

This is very basic but the Milton surface sterilizes the seed and breaks down the hydrophobic seed layer allowing water to imbibe into the seed. The trick is to get the seed up and away before fungal attack.

The better quality the seed the quicker the germination.

It is also important to store seed at 26 degrees for a minimum of 5 weeks after it is harvested to prevent any dormancy.

To sow the seeds we use Jiffy pots. These are widely available at your local nursery.

When we are germinating our chilli seeds we use heat blankets to keep the seeds at a constant temperature of 28 to 32 degree Celsius. This is the best temperature to germinate chilli seeds at!

You do not have to use a heat blanket ofcourse. You can also try to put them on top of your fridge that is normally also a constant warm temperature.

The germination should take around the 5 – 14 days and it is very exciting to see them sprout up!! (Get your champagne at the ready;=))



After germination they need to grow up and strengthen before you can put them into the soil outside. We keep them until they have at least a couple of leaves and then we select the most healthy looking plants to be sun trained. Yes be careful in the beginning because although chillies like their sun when they are little babies they have to get used to it and need to be slowly introduced to the sun. We use trolleys to move them outside our hothouse and slowly build up the amount of sun. Start with max half an hour and make that longer every day.

Then you can transplant the new chilli plants to the soil in either pots or just as is into the garden soil!

They like full sun and when very hot give them water twice or three times a day. They love good food too and if you take really good care of them they will last for years!

After 4 – 6 months the first fruit should appear and you can start harvesting. Wait until they are fully ripe before you pick them to give them that extra heat...

When winter comes around; they do not like it too cold so make sure you put them inside or if you keep them outside over winter: make sure that they have plenty of mulch and newspapers around the stems so they stay nice and warm.

Prune them right back just before the frost will hit them. But when pruning make sure to leave enough of green leaves on the left over branches so the plant can survive the winter and shoot up in spring again. If they survive the winter the whole cycle starts again and this time you should get your fruit sooner in about 4 months because the plants are already established. If you treat your plants well you should get a couple of years of fun out of them. Enjoy!!

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