

PLANT * GROW

- * Plant peppers in full sun. Peppers need at least 8 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- * If you purchase pepper plants, look for sturdy, short, dark green plants.
- * Pepper plants are annuals. (They need to be planted each year.)
- * If sowing seeds indoors, start 6-8 weeks before transplanting outside. Seeds germinate best at 75-90°F.
- * Plant seedlings outside when nighttime temperatures are consistently above 45°F.
- * Peppers grow best in well drained, fertile soil.
- * To reduce root disease risk, don't plant on soil that has recently grown peppers, potatoes, tomatoes or eggplant for at least two years.
- * Fruiting can be a challenge in northern areas of New York. Black row covers can help extend growing season in cold areas.
- * Green bell peppers turn red when fully ripe.
- * Harvest peppers before frost. Frost will kill your peppers.

Cornell University Home Garden Websites:

General gardening:

<http://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/>

Pepper specific:

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scenec6be.html>

PURCHASE

- * Peppers become available in New York State beginning in July.
- * Select firm, glossy peppers with taut, unwrinkled skin and fresh, green stems.
- * Peppers should feel heavy for their size.

ENJOY YOUR PEPPERS

- * Pepper varieties can be red, green, yellow, orange purple and brown. Colorful bell peppers represent the mature version of the green bell pepper. Peppers are highly nutritious. Sweet peppers are high in vitamins A & C and B-complex.
- * Cut peppers into rings, strips, or dice. They make a colorful, healthy addition to salads, stir fries, soups and stews; or serve raw plain or with dip or hummus.

Websites for Healthy Eating:

USDA: www.myplate.gov

Cornell University Food & Nutrition Education in Communities (FNEC): <https://fnec.cornell.edu/>

PREPARE

- * Rinse peppers before preparing. Rub briskly under clean running water. Seeds of sweet peppers may be bitter, so remove.
- * Hot pepper seeds and the white inside flesh is where most of the "heat" is concentrated; so remove these parts. Always wear gloves when touching hot peppers!
- * Wash hands with warm, soapy water if exposed to hot peppers. Do not touch your face or eyes!

PRESERVE

- * Store sweet peppers unwashed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.
- * Green peppers keep longer (over a week) than ripe, colored peppers do (up to one week.)
- * Peppers with soft spots should be used immediately.
- * Hot peppers should be stored wrapped in paper towels rather than in a plastic bag. Moisture causes them to decay quickly.
- * Hot peppers will keep well for several weeks in the refrigerator.

Food Preservation Websites:

National Center for Home Food Preservation:
www.homefoodpreservation.com

CCE Herkimer County Food Preservation Resources:

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/food-preservation-resources/>



RECYCLE * COMPOST

- * Disease free pepper scraps provide a rich nitrogen source, nutrients and moisture to your compost.
- * Vegetable scraps are the "green" additions to your compost.

Composting Resources:

Cornell Waste Management Institute:

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/resources.htm>

Composting at Home publication:

<http://cwmi.ccs.cornell.edu/smallscale.htm>

Vegetable Stuffed Peppers

- 6 medium green bell peppers
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1-3 garlic cloves, minced (optional)
- 1-1/2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 cup **each** cooked corn and green beans (from fresh, canned or frozen)

Wash peppers. Cut tops off; remove seeds. Heat vegetable oil; sauté onion and garlic. In large bowl, mix rice, carrots, corn, and green beans. Add sautéed onion and garlic; mix thoroughly.

Fill each pepper with 1 cup of vegetable/rice mixture.

Lightly spray 9"X13" casserole dish. Place filled peppers in dish, upright. Pour 4 cups spaghetti sauce over peppers. Cover loosely with foil. Bake at 350°F for 1 to 1-1/2 hours or until peppers are fork tender.

Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1 pepper with sauce (300 calories, 8 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 10 grams fiber, 75 mg sodium)



Quick Quesadillas

- non-stick cooking spray (or 1 Tablespoon oil)
- 1-1/2 cups bell pepper slices (red, green, orange and/or yellow)
- 1/2 cup sliced onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 whole wheat tortillas
- 4 ounces low-fat cheddar cheese (1 cup)

Spray medium skillet with cooking spray or add one Tablespoon of vegetable oil. Sauté onions and peppers until softened. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute more. Top each tortilla with 1/4 of the vegetables and one ounce of the cheese. Fold each tortilla in half. Place tortillas, two at a time, in fry pan and crisp on both sides, until cheese is melted. Serve.

Yield: 4 servings; serving size 1 quesadilla (140 calories, 2.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 grams fiber, 350 mg sodium)

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HerKimer County Farmers' Markets

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/local-farmers-markets/>



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Creating Healthy Places

Peppers



HerKimer County Produce Cycle

