VEGETABLES · A WARM, SUNNY PATIO OR DECK

Let's grow bell pepper.

Capsicum annuum

This plan is for **Sweet bell pepper**

Is this your plant? This recipe uses one sweet bell pepper plant in at least 5 US gallons. Check the nursery label for mature size and harvest color; giant or other pepper types need their own space and timing plan.

One sunny pot. Sweet peppers to pick.

5-gallon pot **1 nursery start**

Before you start

Plant outside after frost danger has passed and the potting mix has warmed. Ease seedlings into outdoor sun first; keep one plant and add its support early.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 26, 2026 View sources ↗

LIGHT

Lots of sun

Choose at least 6 hours of sun; a longer sunny day is better.

WATER

Consistent moisture

Check often as the pot grows full of roots and fruit.

FEEDING

Regular after starter feed

Let the purchased mix set the feeding start point; use one measured program.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ One 5-gallon planter with drainage
- ✓ Fresh potting mix, a small cage or stake, and soft ties
- ✓ 1 sweet bell pepper nursery start

THE SOIL

Miracle-Gro Organic Potting Mix (US; contains starter nutrients—check your bag)

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

One pot. Here's the plan.

A warm, sunny patio or deck. Start with **nursery start**.

THE POT

5-gallon pot

At least 5 US gallons, with drainage holes and a broad, stable base; larger is fine.

HOW MANY

1 nursery start

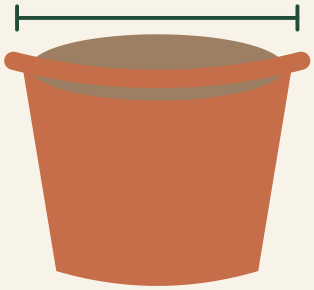
Choose a labeled sweet bell pepper; check its mature size.

THE CONTAINER

5-gallon pot

START WITH

1 nursery start



Drainage holes



Illustration · not to scale

5-gallon pot · 1 nursery start At least 5 US gallons, with drainage holes and a broad, stable base; larger is fine. Choose a labeled sweet bell pepper; check its mature size. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Wait for warm weather

Move outside after frost risk has passed and the soil has warmed. Cold soil can leave a pepper sitting still.

02

Plant one pepper

Set the root ball at the same soil level as its nursery pot. Water it in and leave a watering gap below the rim.

03

Add a small support

Put in a cage or stake while the plant is small. Tie stems loosely as fruit develops so heavy branches have support.

04 Cut ripe fruit free

Use clean scissors or pruners. Pick a full-size green pepper, or leave it to reach the mature color shown on the label.

Help with the setup: drainage holes and saucers · potting mix vs. garden soil.

Other ways to start

Grow a start from seed

Start indoors about 8 weeks before your outdoor planting date, following the packet for your variety. For this one-plant project, sow 1 seed in each of 2 small cells of damp seed-starting mix, ¼ inch deep. Give seedlings bright overhead light and keep the mix moist. Keep the best plant and gradually acclimate it outdoors before transplanting. University of Maryland's indoor seed-starting guide explains containers, warmth, and lighting. The two-cell batch is our small-project adaptation.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Water when the top inch is dry, then drain. Check each morning and again on hot, windy afternoons.

FERTILIZER

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

AMOUNT

1 tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. Wet the root zone and let excess drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not a per-pot serving.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Every 14 days during active growth.

WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

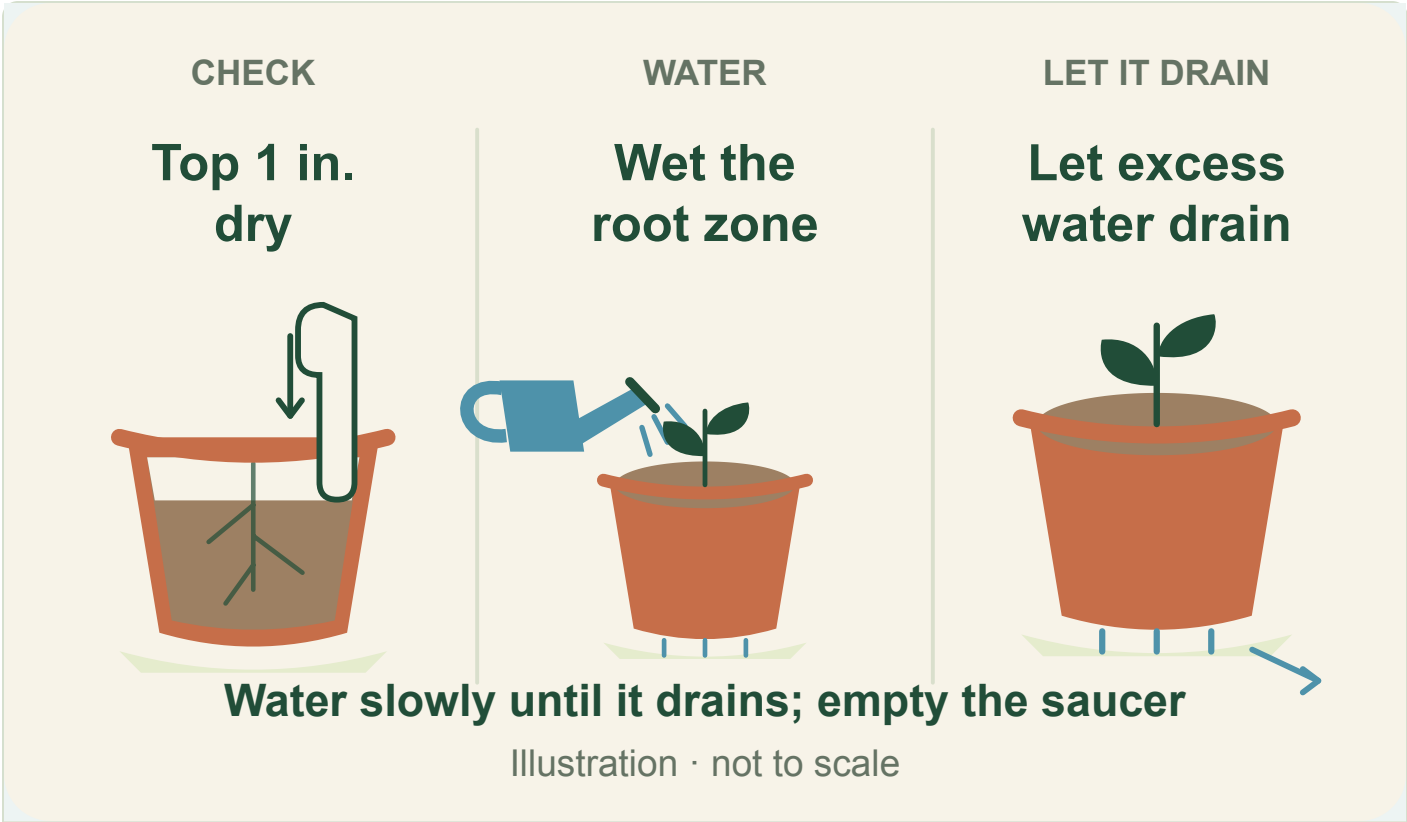
Use the purchased potting-mix bag's start point. Correct wilt or waterlogging first; use one ongoing feeding program.

The 14-day interval is the slower end of the US product's outdoor range. Extra nitrogen is not a cure for poor fruit set.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Feel the top inch each morning. If dry, water slowly at the roots until the pot drains. Check again during hot, windy afternoons. Do not let it swing repeatedly between wilted-dry and soaking wet.



Check before watering. Water when the top inch is dry, then drain. Check each morning and again on hot, windy afternoons. Original illustration; not to scale.

> **The easy rule**
>
> Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

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02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

Do not add extra fertilizer at planting in the fresh enriched mix listed here. Read your purchased bag for when to start additional feeding; “up to two months” is not a fixed waiting period. Do not combine this soluble-food routine with another ongoing fertilizer program.



1 tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. Wet the root zone and let excess drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not a per-pot serving. Every 14 days during active growth. Use the purchased potting-mix bag's start point. Correct wilt or waterlogging first; use one ongoing feeding program. Original illustration; not to scale.



US PRODUCT REFERENCE

Miracle-Gro

Water Soluble All Purpose

24-8-16

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.

A SPECIFIC US PRODUCT

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

Once extra feeding is due, dissolve 1 tablespoon of Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16) in 1 US gallon of water. Apply every 14 days during active growth. Wet the root zone and let excess drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not the amount one pepper must receive. Correct wilt or waterlogging before feeding, and follow your purchased US package if directions differ. Extra nitrogen can encourage leaves at the expense of fruit.

Check the manufacturer's product page ↗

Use the named US formulation. A different product or concentration needs different directions. The amount mixed is a batch, not a dose to pour into one pot.

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03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Green peppers or fully colored fruit

Many bell peppers reach a full-size green harvest roughly 70–80 days after transplanting; reaching red, yellow, or orange takes longer. Use your cultivar's label as the closer guide.

When to grow peppers outdoors

This is a warm-season outdoor crop. In a short-summer area, choose an earlier variety and buy a healthy start. More fertilizer will not make cold weather suitable.

For regional planting windows, find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗.

Something looking off?

Why are flowers dropping before peppers form?

Heat or dry roots can interrupt fruit set. Check the pot's moisture and the recent temperatures, then maintain steady watering. Avoid doubling fertilizer; a leafy plant is not necessarily short of food.

Why is there a dark sunken patch at the bottom?

Blossom-end rot is one possible cause. Uneven moisture can limit calcium reaching developing fruit. Keep moisture steady and check drainage before buying calcium supplements. A photo or symptom alone does not establish which problem you have.

Do I need a second plant for peppers?

No. Peppers are largely self-fertile, so one healthy plant can set fruit. Keep one in this pot and support its branches. If fruit is not setting, check heat, moisture, light, and feeding before adding another plant.

Choosing harvest color and adding support

Choose green or fully colored peppers

A green bell pepper is generally an earlier harvest stage. Waiting for its cultivar's ripe color changes flavor and takes extra time; not every variety turns the same color.

Support the plant and leave watering space

Leave access to the soil around the plant for checking and watering. One pepper plus a small support is the entire project; it does not need a crowded companion planting.

Help with your next step.

Avoid doubling up on fertilizer

Check whether your potting mix already feeds the plant before adding a soluble fertilizer.

Water a container evenly

Learn to wet the mix and let excess water drain while keeping the saucer empty.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- University of Maryland: pepper conditions and harvest stages ↗
  https://extension.umd.edu/resource/growing-peppers-home-garden
- University of Maryland: 5-gallon pepper containers ↗
  https://extension.umd.edu/resource/growing-vegetables-containers-and-salad-tables
- University of Maryland: indoor seed starting ↗
  https://extension.umd.edu/resource/starting-vegetable-seeds-indoors
- University of Minnesota: pepper planting and water stress ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/growing-peppers
- Manufacturer: starter feed in the named potting mix ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html
- Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/plant-food-and-care/miracle-gro-water-soluble-all-purpose-plant-food.html
- University of Maryland: blossom-end rot and contributing conditions ↗
  https://extension.umd.edu/resource/blossom-end-rot-vegetables

Something needs updating? Suggest a correction

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.