

Protected cropping of Sweet Pepper

Recognize the problem

Inconsistent supply of sweet peppers during the rainy season occurs because of unpredictable rain and the frequency of disease and pests.

Background

Tropical greenhouses offer protection against insect attack, excessive rainfall, intense sunlight and wind. Two types exist: prefabricated metal or locally constructed wooden structures. Metal greenhouses need to be imported but a local carpenter can construct a hardwood tropical greenhouse. Best results are obtained using a greenhouse with 13 to 15 feet side walls which should be covered with insect proof netting. The roof of the greenhouse is usually covered with a clear, thin (40 micron) polyethylene plastic.

Management

Cultivation in the greenhouse is similar to conventional cultivation using small tractors. Alternatively, sweet peppers can be cultivated in 5 gallon pots with a minimum diameter of 13 inches (or 32.5cm) to facilitate proper root development. Fill pots with compost or peat moss. Pots must be well watered and a drip irrigation system controlled by a timer is recommended for most efficient utilization of water.

Plant sweet pepper seedlings at 30cm spacing for both soil and pot planting. Seedlings are watered 5 to 6 times weekly and fertilizer is applied 3 times a week which is set on the timer of the drip irrigation system.

The main pests of sweet peppers under greenhouse cultivation are broad mites which can be controlled using Abamectin as recommended on the label at flower initiation, approximately 3 to 4 weeks after planting.

In a protected cropping environment it is recommended to harvest sweet peppers weekly. Each plant generally yields 1lb of sweet peppers per week. These plants will produce for up to 1 year as opposed to 4 to 6 weeks under conventional cultivation. However, adequate pollination should be ensured.

A crop of sweet pepper in a protected cropping environment. The initial costs are high but increased production will pay for your investment. (Photo by Colin Wiltshire)



High roofed tropical greenhouse. The high roof allows the house to be kept cooler than other houses, which is important in pepper production. (Photo by Phil Taylor)



When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Capsicum spp.*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Barbados



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Edited by Plantwise.