



# Chilli Growing Kit

## - Instructions -

The best time of year to sow chilli seeds is between February and May, the earlier the better for very hot varieties; you can sow seeds later than this but the chilli fruits may not ripen.

### **Rehydrating the coir compost plugs**

Coir compost plugs are compressed, dehydrated coir compost (100% peat-free) which need to be rehydrated before sowing seeds into them. Place 8 coir plugs in the base of the propagator - open-side up. Slowly pour about 250ml of tepid water over the plugs - they expand quite quickly.

### **Sowing seeds in the coir plugs**

Place one or two seeds on to each plug and push the seeds just below the surface of the compost. Label the plugs with the labels and pencil supplied. Put the propagator lid on and place the propagator in a warm place away from direct sunlight. Ideally, the temperature inside the propagator should be between 25°C - 35°C. If you have a warming mat or heating mat, place the propagator on the mat. Once the seeds have germinated, move the propagator to a bright spot (ideally a greenhouse or a sunny windowsill) but to avoid overheating, you will need to open the vent or remove the lid completely on hot days, to allow air-flow and prevent condensation. As the seedlings develop, keep the compost moist, but not wet (ensure that there is no excess water in the base of the propagator).

### **Potting-on the coir plugs**

Once the seedlings start to out-grow the plugs (when they have three or four sets of leaves), the plugs can be potted-on into a 13cm (1Ltr) pot. Place a handful of compost into the pot, place the plug on this base and fill in around with more compost. Ideally the top of the coir plug should be just below the surface of the compost and the compost level should be about 2cm down from the lip of the pot. Firm the compost and water well. Use any free-draining compost, we recommend soil-based because it can be easily re-wet when dry.

### **Aftercare**

Chilli plants enjoy a soil temperature of 20°C during the day. Ideally, the plants should be kept between 20°C and 25°C during the day, and 10°C to 20°C at night. In the Spring, a warming mat is useful to maintain this temperature. Avoid over-watering and do not allow the pots to sit in excess water.

Additional growing equipment and plant food can be found in our online shop: [www.sdco.uk](http://www.sdco.uk)

See over for more chilli plant care advice.....

# Growing Chillies from Seed and Chilli Plant Care Advice

## Germinating Chilli Seeds

The best time to sow seeds is between February and May, the earlier the better for very hot varieties; you can sow seeds later than this but the fruits may not ripen. The compost needs to be between 20°C and 35°C with 30°C being ideal; a warming tray or heated propagator will help. Plant the seeds in moist (not wet) seed compost at a depth of 2 to 5mm. To keep an even temperature, it is best not to expose the seed compost to direct sunlight. If conditions are ideal, the first seeds should appear within 7 - 14 days. Once most of the seeds have germinated, move the seedlings to a sunny spot - ideally in a heated greenhouse for best light. Take care not to let the compost dry out or become too wet.

## Pricking-out

Once the seedlings have produced true leaves (pointed leaves), each seedling can be transplanted into its own pot (a 7.5cm pot is ideal). Take care not to damage the seedlings - holding only by a leaf is best and using a blunt 'dibber' to separate one seedling from the other. Use any free-draining compost, we recommend soil-based because it can be easily re-wet when dry. Keep the compost above 18°C and ideally at 20°C for rapid growth.

## Potting On

For plants that will be matured in pots, pot-on as they out-grow the pot. For small varieties, a 13cm (1Ltr) pot may be fine as a final size; for larger plants, a 22 - 30cm (5 - 10Ltr) will be better. Pots can be left outside once the risk of frost has passed, but they will do better if kept in a greenhouse or indoors overnight. Plants that will be kept outside will benefit from hardening-off.

## Fruit Setting, Feeding, Watering and Pests

Try to keep the plants above 17°C and below 36°C (25°C being ideal) to promote fruit-setting; if the plants are exposed to temperatures outside this range, you may experience blossom-drop. Feeding your plants will help fruit development. If feeding with Chilli Focus (available on our website), see the instructions on the bottle. Water plants when dry but avoid over-watering and do not allow pots to sit in excess water. For advice on pests such as aphids, see the "How To...Growing.." section at: [www.sdcf.co.uk](http://www.sdcf.co.uk)

## Picking

The chillies can be picked at any stage and will be milder when immature. Picking fruits as soon as they are ready will encourage more fruit setting. If you want chillies for drying, they look more attractive if left to ripen first. For plants that produce a heavy crop, such as Jalapeno, feeding with a high-potash feed (such as 'Chilli Focus') will be needed to encourage a succession of fruits.

## Overwintering

Most chilli plants can be treated as perennial house plants, but may need some pruning in the winter. Smaller varieties are best for overwintering and for house plants, for example: Apache, Twilight, Prairie Fire and Super.

**South Devon Chilli Farm, Wigford Cross, Loddiswell, Devon TQ7 4DX**  
[www.southdevonchillifarm.co.uk](http://www.southdevonchillifarm.co.uk) Tel: 01548 550782

For more growing tips, email:  
[growing@southdevonchillifarm.co.uk](mailto:growing@southdevonchillifarm.co.uk)