



Chilli Seedling Plugs - Instructions -

Unpacking and Care on Arrival

NOTE: the seedlings are arranged in marked slots - **A to F** (embossed on the plastic pack). When potting-on, please refer to the label on the lid of the pack to identify the variety and we advise marking each plant with a label to make it easier to identify the variety later.

IMPORTANT: the plastic pack containing the seedlings should be opened as soon as possible.

The pack has a moulded base in which the seedlings are held and a flat lid with a hinged edge and a 'popper' edge. Place the pack on a flat surface with the flat lid-side up and open from the 'popper' edge by carefully pulling the two layers of plastic apart.

Remove each seedling, holding it by the soil plug (not the stem or leaves) and stand it up in the flat section of moulded base of the tray (taking care not to mix up the seedling varieties). If you are unable to pot-on when the seedlings first arrive, the plugs can be left standing in the flat base of the pack and watered in-situ until you are ready to pot-on.

Potting-on

You will need some compost, clean plant pots, plant labels and a pencil or permanent marker pen. Use any free-draining compost, we recommend soil-based, such as John Innes No.2 formula, because it can be easily re-wet when dry. A 13cm (1Ltr) pot is an ideal size for the seedlings. Fill each pot with about 3cm of compost, sit each seedling plug on top (holding by the soil plug), and gently fill in with compost around the plug. You should aim to cover the soil plug by about 1cm. Gently firm-down the compost and water with room-temperature water.

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.sdcf.co.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

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.

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