

## **Capsicum Farming**

Capsicum is also known as sweet pepper or Hoho. The crop can be grown in a greenhouse or in an open field. In Kenya, Capsicum/Hoho has a high demand. It is a good source of vitamin A and C and commonly used as a vegetable stew or salads. The crop is rarely attacked by diseases and does well in warm areas.



### **Ecological requirements**

- Capsicum can tolerate a wide range of climatic conditions from warm temperate to tropical, including irrigated dry hot areas.
- It is sensitive to frost and the optimum temperatures for proper growth is 15 to 25°C.
- The vegetables grow well in altitudes of up to 2,000 metres above sea level.
- Capsicum can grow on moist well-drained loamy or heavy cracking clay soils with an optimum pH range of 6.0 to 6.5

### **Varieties**

Capsicum varieties are primarily identified by the mature colour which can be green, red or yellow. Others may include orange, black, cream, brown and lime coloured varieties. The guideline in choosing a variety should be that it is resistant to disease, produce higher yields of fruit, produce more uniform fruit or be more suited to the latest market requirements.

### **Nursery establishment**

First, raise the seedlings in a nursery.

1. Make sunken or raised nurseries 1M wide
2. Apply 20 kg/m<sup>2</sup> of manure and planting fertiliser like MAVUNO planting fertilizer NPK 10.26.10. This will ensure strong and healthy seedlings

3. Sow seeds thinly in drills 1.5 inches deep
  4. Drench with PEARL 50SC and CONTROL 70DF to control early pests and diseases
  5. Cover with a light soil and mulch
  6. Water 2-3 times a week especially if you are in a hot environment.
  7. After 2-3 weeks, the seeds will start to germinate. Remove the mulch and make a shade over it
  8. Capsicums seedlings will be ready for transplanting after 5-6 weeks.
- You need ½ kg/ha of seeds in the nursery and 1 kg/ha for direct sowing.

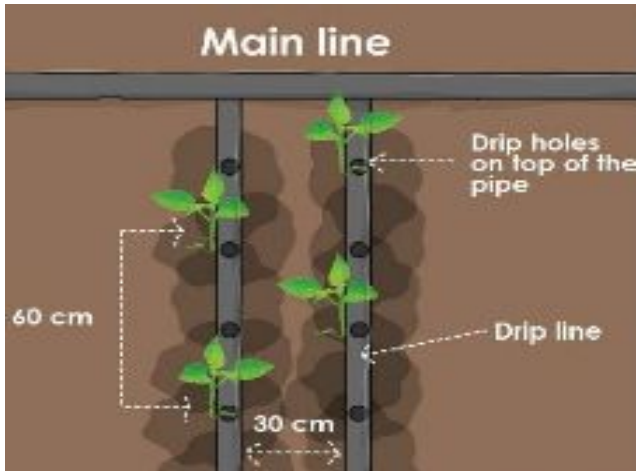
### **Transplanting**

1. Seedlings are ready for transplanting after 4-6 weeks when they have an height of 10 to 15cm.
2. One day before transplanting, harden the capsicum seedlings by reducing frequency of watering gradually.
3. On the day of transplanting, wet the nursery enough to wet the soil and allow easy uprooting of the pilipili hoho seedling from the nursery without damaging the roots.



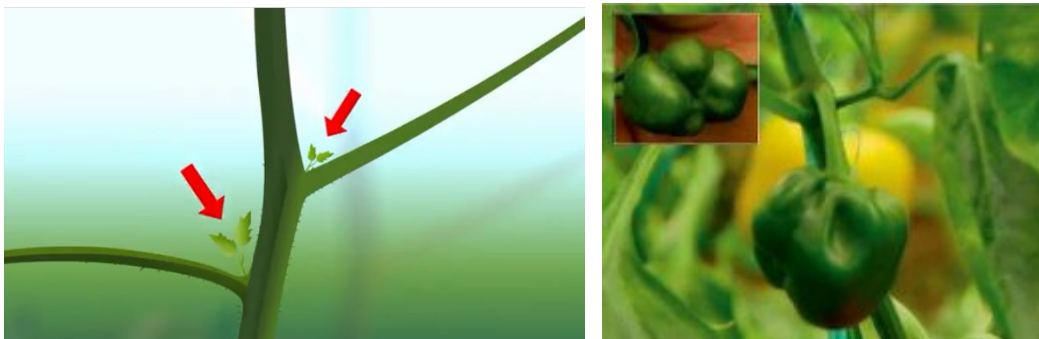
*Transplant the seedlings when they are 10-15cm tall (pencil high)*

4. Plant capsicum seedlings at a spacing of 60cm by 30cm. When using drip lines, make holes next to the plant.



### Field Management Practices

1. Prune your capsicums every week to let the plant use less water and nutrients to make big fruits and of the same size. This is done by taking off:
  - Small fruits and those with bad shape
  - Suckers (side shoots) to leave only 2 shoots on each plant
  - Old leaves and leaves with diseases
  - The first fruit so that the plant can grow better and give big ones



*Prune side shoots, old leaves and small fruits*

2. Water regularly so that the plants get enough water. Each plant needs  $\frac{1}{2}$  litre every day. It is recommended to water 2-3 times a week.
3. Topdress 1 month after transplanting with 10 grams of MAVUNO TOP-DRESSING fertilizer NPK 26.0.0 per plant. Topdress again after 4 weeks. You need 100 kg/ha of nitrogenous fertilise like MAVUNO TOP-DRESSING NPK 26..0.0, CAN or equivalent source during the first topdressing and four weeks later another 200 kg/ha should be applied.

4. Weed to avoid competition for nutrient, water, space and light

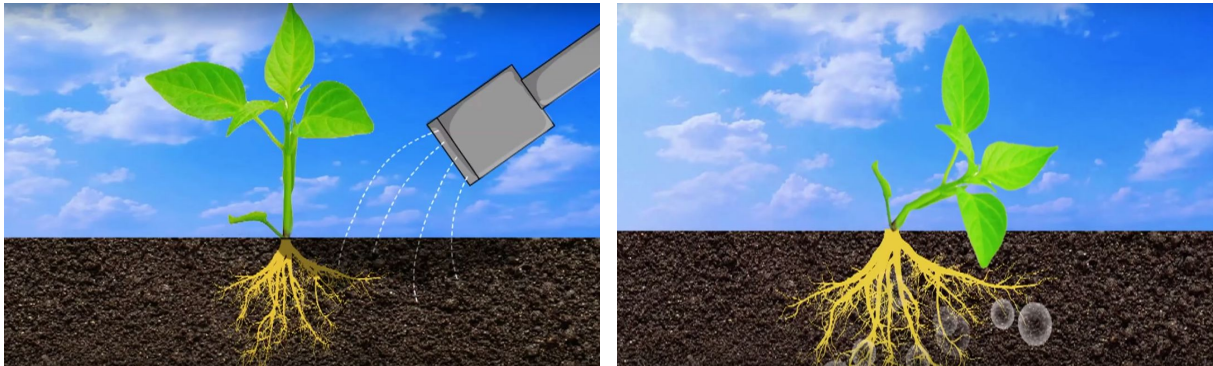
## Diseases and Pests:

### 1. Early/Late Blight

Commonly referred to as baridi by some farmers. The leaves start folding up giving a poor fruit and a low harvest. Control using MASTER OR MISTRESS from Osho Chemicals

### 2. Damping-off

It is a fungal infection caused by excess water in the soil which makes the plant not take up nutrients in the soil. After a while, the stem grows weak, bend, falls off and rots. Avoid excess watering and water only when soil is slightly dry. Always follow a regular pattern when watering.



*Water regularly and only when soils are a bit dry. Excess water cause stems to fall off and rot*

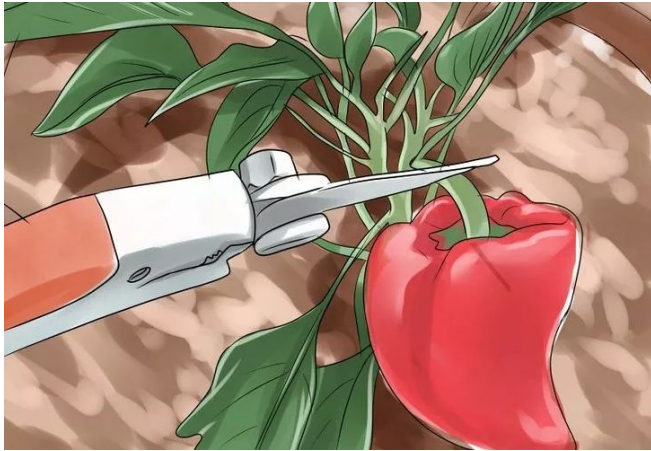
## Pests

1. **Spider Mites** - They are very small red mites and can feed on the whole crop at any stage. Control using effective insecticides e.g VAPCOTHION
2. **Thrips** - Thrips mostly attack the flowers. Scout the field daily to spot them early. To control, spray with insecticides e.g ASATAF.
3. **Whiteflies** - They are small white insects found on the leaves especially during the rainy season. Control whiteflies insecticides e.g CYCLONE, ACTARA or CAMPAIGN

## Harvesting

Harvest 2 ½ to 3 months after after planting. You will continue harvesting for the next 4-6 months under good management. When harvesting:

- Pick only mature fruits and package for market. Harvest fruits with a small stem holding to it.
- Harvest when filled out and still green.
- Place harvested fruits under shade for grading, sorting, and packaging to avoid shrivelling.
- Export produce should conform to the required standards with respect to quality, packaging and labelling.



*Harvest when variety colour starts to appear, cut the holding stem with a sharp object*

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