

Black Pepper Farming / Black Pepper Cultivation

Black pepper is a popular spice also known as the king of spices. Planting black pepper has good economic importance due to its earnings from exports and foreign markets.

Improved commercial varieties of black pepper in India are Panniyur 1; yields about 1240 kg/ ha. Panniyur 2; yields about 2600kg/ ha, Panniyur 3; yields about 1950 kg/ ha, Panniyur 4; yields about 1270 kg/ ha, panniyur 5; yields about 1100 kg/ ha. Subhakara; yields about 2350 kg/ ha, Sreekara; yields about 2680 kg/ ha, Panchami; yields about 2800 kg/ ha, and Pournami which yields about 2300 kg/ha.

Soil and climate requirements

Black pepper thrives best in tropical, hot and humid areas and an annual rainfall of about 200 cm. The ideal soil for planting black pepper should be red loam and sandy loam soil that is rich in humus content, well drained and with a pH value of 5 to 6.5.

Black pepper is propagated by cuttings or seeds. However, seeds take longer and is not suitable for commercial cultivation. In vegetative propagation, plant 2-3 nodes of pepper cuttings in a bamboo baskets filled with soil or raised in plastic bags.

Planting of black pepper

Pepper cuttings are ready to transplant in about 3 months. However, due to its climbing nature, black pepper needs some kind of support. Plant the black pepper at a distance of 3-4 m, on a size of 0.5 by 0.5 by 0.5 m and at a distance of 30 cm away from the support.

Before the monsoon starts, plant 2-3 rooted cuttings in pits filled with soil and well rotten manure. At least one node of the plant cutting should go underground and the remaining above the ground.

Weeding should be done for better yield, growth and soil aeration and any hanging shoots removed.

Harvesting of black pepper

Black pepper is ready for harvest when the berries start showing the red colour about 6-7 months of planting, and are to be hand picked and sun dried.

Main pests and diseases found in black pepper are flea beetle, scale insects, slow wilt and quick wilt.