

BUSH PEPPER

**A NOVEL WAY OF GROWING BLACK PEPPER
IN HOMESTEAD AND TERRACE GARDENS**



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Black pepper of commerce is the dried fruits of climbing vine *Piper nigrum* L.

Pepper vines are usually cultivated by allowing them to climb on supports either living (on live trees) or non-living (RCC posts, granite stones, teak poles etc.). Pepper vines while climbing on these supports put forth fruiting branches called laterals which produce flowers and fruits.

The normal way of producing planting material of black pepper is to use the rooted cuttings (single or 3 noded) of runners or climbing shoots. This ensures the plant to turn into a vine and after climbing on a support produces fruiting branches all around the support giving a column-like appearance. But when the fruiting branches are used as planting material, the resultant plants grow like a bush. These bushes produce more and more fruiting branches thus increasing the yield of pepper.

These pepper bushes, as they were produced from fruiting branches, start flowering from the same year. They continue to flower in all seasons of the year if proper watering and manuring are given. They can be grown either in pots or on the field as hedges/rows. They are very attractive and hence can be used as garden plants at the same time giving valuable black pepper for domestic use.

Propagation of bush pepper :

An easy method for rooting of fruiting branches for production of bush pepper has been standardised at the NRC for Spices.

Materials required :

Planting material, sharp blade, polythene bag (45 × 30 cm 200 gauge) moist coir dust, coir thread and rooting hormone (Ceradix-B or Keradix).



Black pepper Rooted lateral

Selection of fruiting branches :

It is important to select good young (1 year old) healthy branches preferably with dormant buds. Too young and too old branches may be avoided.

Preparation of material :

Young healthy laterals from high yielding vines should be collected in a bucket of water, as a precaution against drying. In the nursery these laterals may then be dipped in 0.2% copper oxychloride solution for 20-30 minutes and pruned to 2-4 nodes. Remove the leaves except the 'flag leaf'. These laterals should be given a sharp slanting cut at the basal portion and dipped in rooting hormone powder. After removing the excess powder, these laterals should be planted in a polythene bag with moist coir dust. About 3-4 laterals may be placed in each bag depending upon the size. The mouths

of the bags are to be tightly tied with coir thread to avoid moisture loss from the bag and kept under shade. This bag acts as a 'humid chamber' for better rooting and survival. In about 35-50 days these laterals produce 5-6 very healthy roots. At that time the bags may be opened for 1-2 days to harden the cuttings. Then the cuttings may be carefully removed, planted in poly bags with nursery mixture (forest soil, sand and farm yard manure in equal proportion) and kept in shade (with filtered light) for about 1-2 months for establishment. After establishment these laterals may be transferred either to field or to pots based on choice.

Season:

Trials at NRC for Spices indicated that the best season for 'planting' lateral for rooting is September-January. The success is about 90%.



Bush pepper cul. Karimunda

Manuring :

Bush pepper in pots: It is better to use only FYM for manuring bush pepper in pots. Fertilisers such as garden mixture can be given after mixing in water (about 10 g in 10 litres – give about 1 to 2 litres/pot).

Bush pepper in field: We can apply 2-5 kg of FYM along with NPK in split doses as in the case of pepper vines.

Varieties suited :

All pepper varieties can be used. The most attractive are Karimunda, Panniyur - 1, Kuthiravally, Kalluvally, Aimpiriyan and Kottanadan.

Yield :

Preliminary observations on the yield potential of these bush peppers indicated that the yield of green berries ranged from 50 gm to 1 kg in the second year of planting. The yields increased considerably in third and fourth years. At NRCS we have recorded the highest yield of 4 kg from a four year old bush pepper.

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