

## Herb of the Year 2016

Capsicum/ chili pepper  
Capsicum ssp

When the International Herb Association selects The Herb of The Year it is based on the herb being outstanding in 2 of the 3 categories: Medicinal, Culinary and Decorative.

Peppers are definitely valued for their medicinal properties, as well as their flavor.

Capsicum is a member of the same family of plants as the tomato, potato, eggplant and paprika.

The chili pepper, Capsicum was first cultivated by peoples of Central and South America around 7,000 BC. Capsicum consists of 20 to 27 species with the fruit available in all colors, shapes and sizes.

The plant is an herbaceous fruit that has been used to flavor foods, used as currency, and used medicinally throughout its long history.

Peppers are easy to grow. Plant them in the Spring after there is no threat of frost and they will fruit in the Summer. Ideal growing conditions for peppers are in a sunny location, 70 degrees F to 84 degrees F in a well drained loamy soil.

Capsicum peppers can be eaten raw or cooked.

For thousands of years, humans have selected peppers for traits that affect heat, color, and flavor in the fruit.

Medicinal values in modern medicine are used in topical medications to relieve pain and itching. When it is applied to the skin, capsicum cream has been found to deplete substance P—a neurochemical that transmits pain—which desensitizes a person to pain. Capsicum cream produces a temporary reduction in pain, so it must be used regularly to provide prolonged pain relief.

Some of the conditions include back pain, joint pain, muscle pain, and Fibromyalgia.