

Frankie's Peppers – How to Germinate Pepper Seeds

Congratulations on purchasing chile pepper seeds! These plants will surprise you with how resilient, prolific, and beautiful they are.

HOW-TO: Chile pepper seeds can be germinated in a few different ways; I will give you a quick guide.

PRE-SOAK: There is [strong scientific evidence](#) that a pre-soak will increase your germination rate. There are many different ways you can do this; here are a few.

Soaking Solutions

- Water: this is the simplest soak to rehydrate the seed.
- Chamomile Tea: Easy to get/make tea (and you can drink the leftovers!). Tannins from tea softens seed, chamomile is (supposedly) an antifungal.
- Hydrogen Peroxide (H₂O₂) + Water: Easy to find at any drug store. A 1:1 ratio of 3% H₂O₂ and warm water. Disinfects seeds, softens seed casing.
- Saltpeter (KNO₃) + Water: A little harder to find but studies show that it improves germination rate the most. 3% saltpeter + warm water solution.

The process is very simple, just prepare a solution and sprinkle the seeds into it to sit for anywhere from 4-48 hours, then continue with germination. Make the solution warm (80° or so); this helps wake the seed.

Picture of soak:



Germination

Seeds germinate when they are warm (meaning 80°F - 90°F, or 26°C - 32°C), and damp. That's simple! Don't worry about containers, light, air, or whatever. Just keep them warm and damp.

Pre-germination

Pre-germination is when we germinate the seeds in a different environment before planting them in soil. The benefit of doing it this way is it usually takes up less space and you can see when/which seeds germinate. Then you can plant only the seeds that actually germinated into your grow area, instead of being unsure which ones will come up.

Caveat: If you aren't careful and don't clean/disinfect the seeds, you risk getting moldy seeds!

What you need for pre-germination:

- A sealed container (deli container, Tupperware, Ziploc bag)
- Some medium (paper towel, coffee filter)
- Water

How:

- Spray the medium with water until damp - no standing water/puddles!
- Put the seeds on the medium
- Put medium with the seeds into container
- Seal the container
- Wait until you see a root pop out or wait for full germination, then plant!

Examples:





Direct Sow

Direct sow is the easiest method to do because all that's required is planting the seeds in your seed-starting mix. Of course the downside is you can have blank cells in your tray where some seeds didn't germinate, which wastes precious grow space. I personally recommend a pre-germination step to guarantee your trays are full of seedlings. Chile peppers will produce pod

numbers in the hundreds, even up to the thousands in my experience when given the right soil/growing conditions.

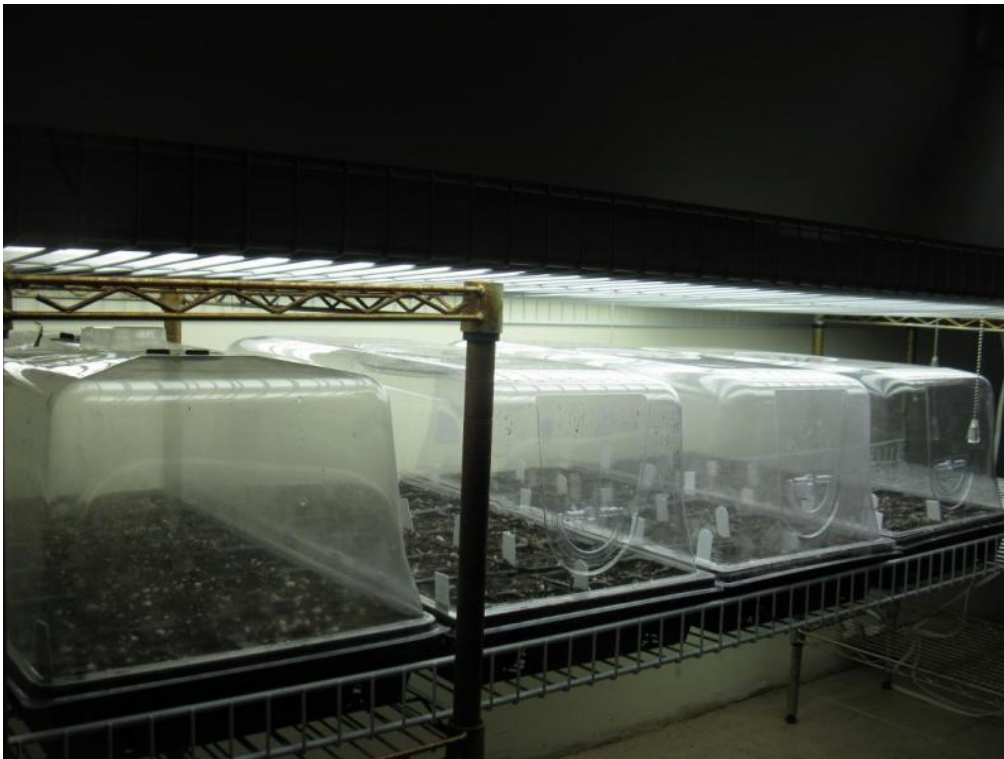
If you are going to do a direct sow, humidity domes are nice because they keep the water from escaping the grow area. This way you don't have to keep adding it and you don't have to worry as much about them drying out.

What you need for direct sow:

- Medium (Rockwool cubes, rapid rooters, coco plugs, etc.)
- *Optional:* humidity dome

How:

- Plant seeds 0.5-1 inch deep in medium
- Keep medium damp until they germinate
- *Remove humidity dome when you see green leaves*





Remove the domes afterwards.



And that's it! You're on your way to growing chile peppers. Additional information on nursing your seedlings will be posted on my website later this year. Depending on the variety of chile, you likely won't see your first fruit on it until about 80-100 days after germination, sometimes longer if you are growing a superhot variety like the ghost pepper. I start my seeds the first week of February and plant outside in May with only 1 transplant in between (I go from seed trays to solo cups and then to the ground), and this gives me chiles starting in mid July. I hope you enjoy the process! There is something really special about starting your own seeds and nurturing a plant from infancy to adulthood (especially chile peppers!), and I'm confident that with some care they will give back to you like you never imagined. ☺
Email/contact me with any questions at all – contact@frankiespeppers.com