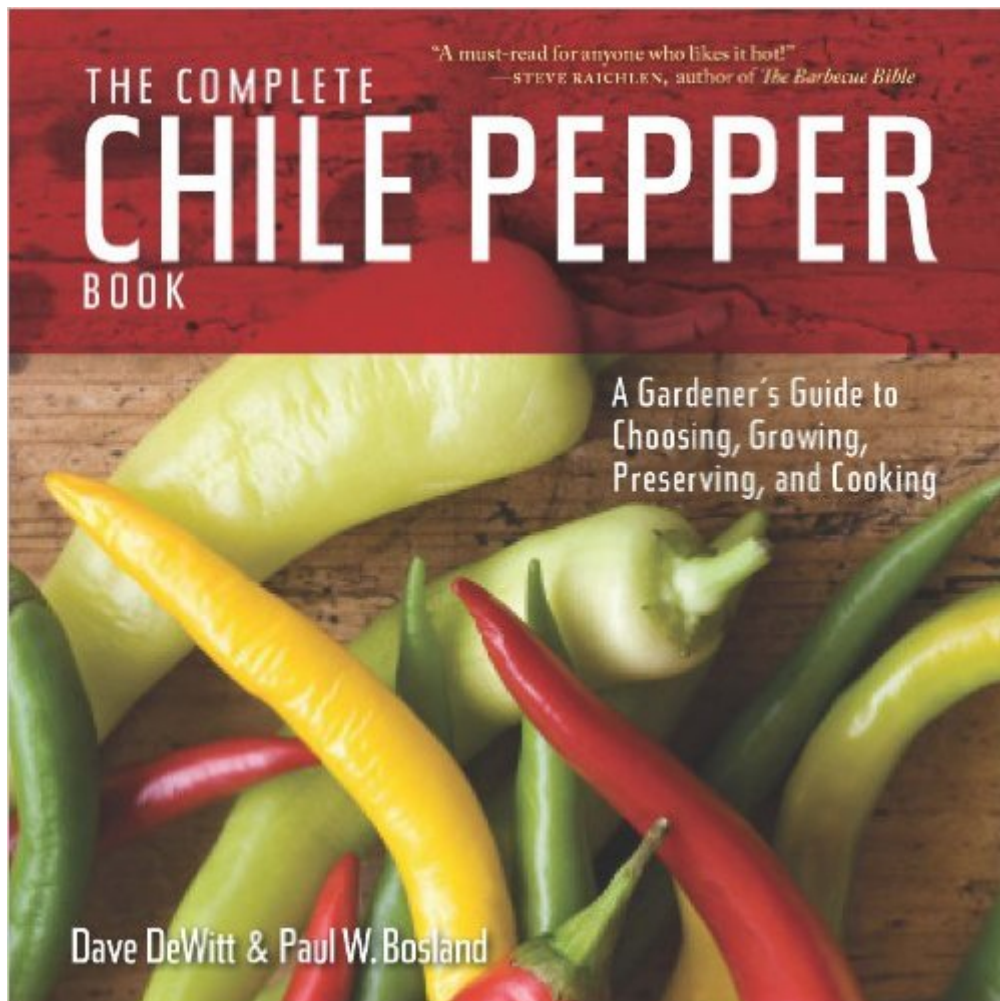


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The Complete Chile Pepper Book: A Gardener's Guide To Choosing, Growing, Preserving, And Cooking



Synopsis

The Complete Chile Pepper Book, by world-renowned chile experts Dave DeWitt and Paul W. Bosland, shares detailed profiles of the one hundred most popular chile varieties and include information on how to grow and cultivate them successfully, along with tips on planning, garden design, growing in containers, dealing with pests and disease, and breeding and hybridizing. Techniques for processing and preserving include canning, pickling, drying, and smoking. Eighty-five mouth-watering recipes show how to use the characteristic heat of chile peppers in beverages, sauces, appetizers, salads, soups, entrees, and desserts. Â

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

this is a good book for those who are not already familiar with chiles (for which "peppers" is a misnomer), have limited gardening experience and/or reference materials, and who want a few recipes wrapped up into a sort of "one stop shopping" text. it is also a great book for those who wish primarily to concentrate on chile gardening, and who have exhausted more rudimentary texts. the book offers a modest history of chiles. the cultivation information is pretty extensive and fascinating, and may prove to enhance my gardening experience this season. the canning and preservation sections are very informative, and if you like a sampling of specialty recipes in something other than a cookbook (which i really do not), there are some good looking ones here. the section actually cataloging individual varieties of chiles left me flat. here dewitt and bosland have listed the "top hundred (or so) chile peppers for the garden", including a brief description of each. the descriptions

are often VERY brief, and uninformative. there is no consistency in what can be expected from them, such as quantified heat levels (expressed in "scoville heat units"), flavor characteristics, sizes, expected yields, and typical days to maturity. the greatest issue i have with this section of the book is the inclusion of only these varieties, leaving out a number of interesting and flavorful chiles, among them hungarians (indeed the only mention of paprika, was in the similarly incomplete "heat scale for chile varieties and commercial products"), and the "fish pepper" (a chesapeake bay favorite).

Like reviewer Davis, the greatest problems I have with this book are the lack of indications of a range of plant sizes and a range of days-to-harvest for the chiles that they deign to cover. They describe the "top hundred (or so) chile peppers for the garden" in fewer than 50 pages (with quite a few excellent photos, though). The amount and type of information given for each chile variety is too variable. For some, but not all entries, you MIGHT find out how big the plant can get, how big the fruit is, what is the heat level (in Scoville units), is it ever a perennial? Both the authors are professors at New Mexico State University. I would be amazed if they would accept a graduate student's thesis with such a degree of inconsistency. Because they are at NMSU and author Bosland is the Director of the Chile Pepper Institute, I must give credit for their considerably better than usual descriptions of a good number of the "Numex" chiles. For anyone who doesn't know, these were all originally developed at NMSU, with some going back to the late 1800's! (yeah, they have history!) The "Numex" breeding program continues in several directions today. The cultivation chapter, the longest in the book, is the best. Based on experiences with commercial growers and home gardeners of variable expertise, the book discusses soil preparation and amendments, seed starting and growing on, water issues, too cold, too hot (? surprising!), too little light or too much (again, a surprise). There are some pages on container growing, and just a few hints about hydroponic, aeroponic, and other soil-less grow systems. There is a very good section on diseases and pests. This chapter also includes short sections on chiles as bonsai (yes!) and breeding and hybridizing chiles.

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