



U.S. National Arboretum Plant Introduction

Capsicum annuum 'Black Pearl'

The USDA Vegetable Lab and U.S. National Arboretum are pleased to present 'Black Pearl' ornamental pepper, an All-America Selection® winner in 2006. The lustrous black leaves and upright habit of 'Black Pearl' create drama in containers or the garden border. From summer to fall, this heat loving annual produces clusters of round fruits that emerge black and turn to cherry red! The color black is a classic in design and a novelty in nature. Capture the unique and classic in your garden landscape—plant 'Black Pearl'.

Recognition: All-America Selection®, 2006





'Black Pearl' Ornamental Pepper

Botanical Name:	<i>Capsicum annuum</i> 'Black Pearl'
Family:	Solanaceae
Hardiness:	Summer annual, USDA Zones 4-10, AHS Heat Zones 10-5
Development:	'Black Pearl' was jointly developed by Dr. John Stommel, USDA, Vegetable Laboratory and Dr. Robert J. Griesbach, U.S. National Arboretum. It resulted from a cross between a purple-foliaged plant (94C27) and a green-foliaged plant bearing clusters of small round fruits (86-Arb-1). The purple-foliaged parent was selected from an open-pollinated population of 'Royal Black', a bushy, variegated purple, green and black cultivar. Selections were made for vigorous plants with dark foliage pigmentation and clusters of upright fruits. Following a series of controlled pollinations to stabilize seed production, 'Black Pearl' was then trialed under field conditions in IL, MD and FL and nationally in the All-America Selections trials in 2004. 'Black Pearl' was developed through a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement with Pan American Seed Company, Elburn, IL. Application has been made for Plant Variety Protection.
Significance:	'Black Pearl' was selected for its unique black foliage color, upright habit, round, black fruit and excellent garden performance in nationwide evaluation. It is a 2006 All-American Selection® winner.
Description:	<p>Height and width: Plants average 18 inches high and 12 inches in diameter, but may grow to 2-3 feet in height in warmer regions with longer growing seasons.</p> <p>Habit: Herbaceous annual with compact upright growth habit. Maintains shape without pruning.</p> <p>Foliage: Very young foliage greenish, maturing to black on upper and lower leaf surfaces. Leaves are alternate, simple, glossy black above and average 3 inches in length and 1.4 inches in width.</p> <p>Flowers: Flowers purple, average 1 inch in diameter, borne in clusters (fascicles), not ornamental. Summer flowering.</p> <p>Fruit: Produced in upright clusters of 6-8 round fruits, 0.6 inch diameter, per cluster. Immature fruits are very shiny black mature to cherry red, and are hot to taste. Period of mature fruit display lasts 80-120 (140) days.</p>
Culture:	For best growth and black leaf color development, grow in full sun. Plants withstand high heat and humidity and do not require pruning to maintain growth habit. Plants prefer well-drained loam or sandy loam soil with some organic matter, and tolerate a wide range of soil pH.
Propagation:	By seed.
Landscape Use:	Bedding plants, containers, mixed containers, background plantings, dramatic contrast against stone or brick walls.
Availability:	Seed widely available from wholesale and retail seed distributors. For additional information contact Dr. John Stommel, Vegetable Laboratory, or Dr. Robert J. Griesbach, USNA, Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit, USDA-ARS, Beltsville, Agricultural Research Center, 10300 Baltimore Ave., Beltsville, MD 20705.

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