



Pepper Production Guide for Florida: Introduction¹

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Bell Peppers are produced on 23,000 acres in Florida with most of the production in the southern Florida counties of Collier, Eastern Palm Beach, Hendry, Lee, Manatee, and Hillsborough (Table 1). Almost 90% of the pepper acreage is located in these southern Florida counties. Central and northern Florida counties with significant pepper acreage include Alachua and Sumter. Nearly all pepper is produced on polyethylene-mulched beds with only a few hundred acres of unmulched pepper in central and northern Florida. Even the nonmulched pepper in central and northern Florida is rapidly being converted to mulched pepper.

Central and northern Florida pepper is planted in February and March and harvested two or three times. Pepper in southern Florida especially in the lower east coast, is often harvested several additional times and this factor accounts for the differences in yield by region.

Many of the same counties producing bell pepper also have significant acreage of hot pepper, most of which are jalapeno peppers. No survey of the hot pepper acreage has been made, but it is estimated that there may be 2000 to 3000 acres of jalapeno pepper and miscellaneous specialty pepper including cayenne and cherry pepper. A significant portion of the jalapeno peppers are grown for the processing industry for use in condiments. Jalapeno peppers are also grown for the fresh market. Yields for the processing crops are about 15 to 20,000 pounds per acre and yields for the fresh market can be as high as 40,000 pounds per acre due to multiple harvests over a long season.

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Table 1. Bell pepper acreage and yields in the various production areas in the state for the 1993-1994 season¹.

Area	Acres harvested	Yield per acre 25-lb cartons	Production 1,000 cartons
Northwest	500	885	443
North central and East central	1,000	993	993
West central	3,400	736	2,505
Southwest	9,500	1,155	10,976
Southeast	7,200	1,227	8,834
State	21,600	1,099	23,748

¹Florida Agricultural Statistics, Vegetable Summary, 1993-94. Florida Agric. Statistics Serv. Orlando, FL.