



Stringing Peppers for Hoophouse Production

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See the video for Stringing Peppers for Hoophouse Production online at www.mifma.org or on MIFMA's YouTube channel.

Peppers are commonly strung or trellised in the hoophouse to increase ease of harvest, support the heavy fruit load, keep plants and fruit off of the ground, and increase airflow to decrease disease pressure. Most frequently, peppers are trellised using a basket-weave technique common for field-grown determinate tomatoes.

Wooden or metal stakes are driven into the ground in the row with two to three pepper plants between them. Wooden stakes are commonly 1" x 1" x 40" size and can be either treated or untreated lumber. For USDA Certified Organic production, treated lumber cannot be in contact with the soil, so either untreated or metal stakes would be necessary in that situation. These posts can be installed using either a post-pounder (automated or manual) or a sledge hammer. End posts do not usually need additional anchoring when stringing peppers.

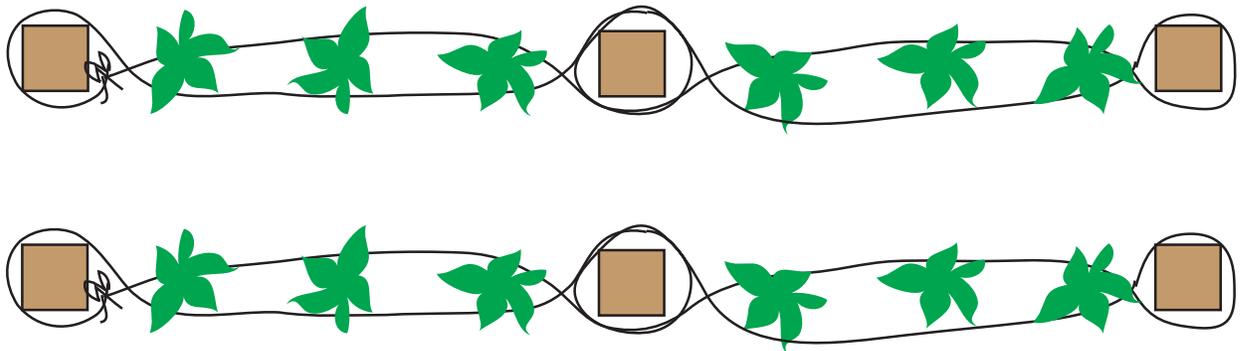
Depending on variety and bed size, peppers are most often planted as a double row in a 3 or 4 foot bed with approximately 1 to 2 feet between the row and 1 to 1.5 feet in-row. For smaller peppers or smaller plants, 1 foot is the recommended in-row spacing. For hot and bell peppers, 1.5 feet is recommended.

Tomato twine is available in boxes of 6,300 and 7,500 feet that can attach to one's belt and is a common and durable material for stringing peppers. These rolls of twine range from \$6.50-\$15 each. The twine is one-time use only. Baling twine, while sometimes used, is not recommended as it breaks down more quickly in the sun and may not last a whole season.

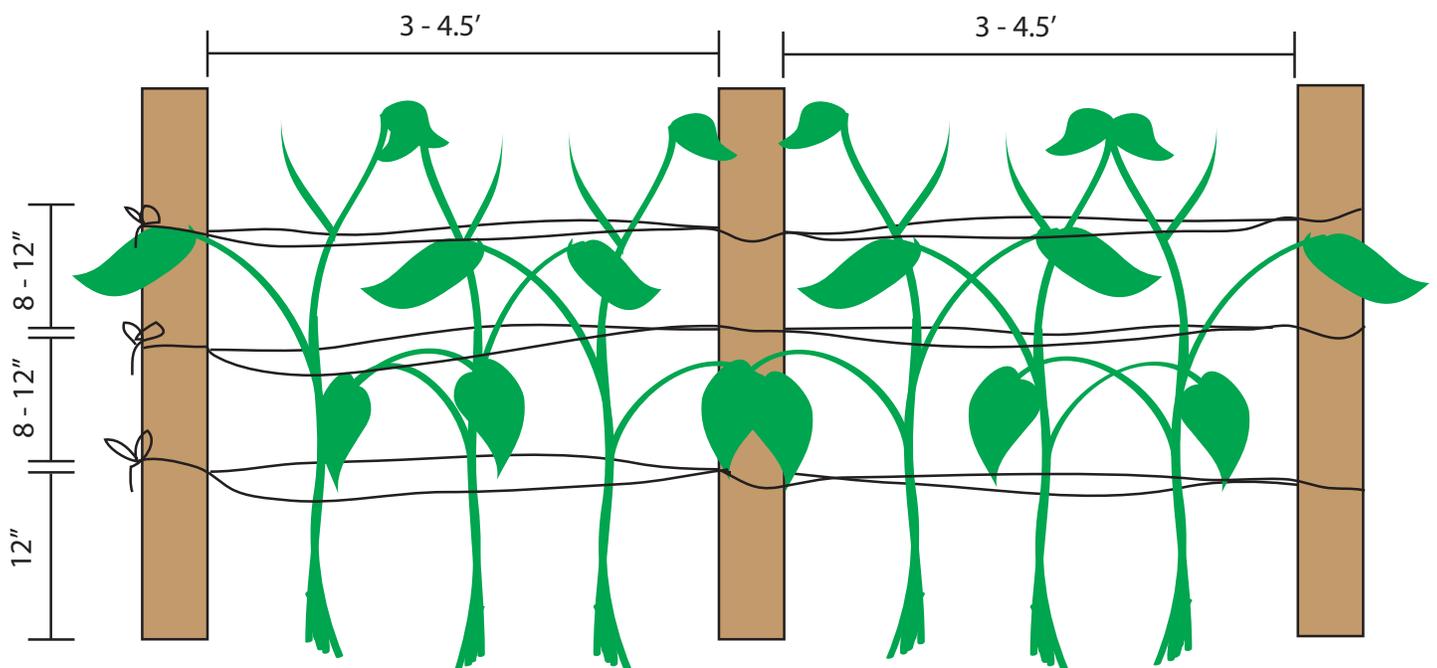


The first line of twine is often installed around 10 - 12 inches above the ground. Additional levels of the twine are attached as the plant grows with approximately 8 - 12 inches between the strings. These strings should be run just under a large branch of the pepper plant so that the weight of the plant is supported by the string at a point where the plant will not break or snap. Avoid placing these lines in advance, before the plant grows, as the plants will have to be pushed through string already in place and will most likely be damaged. Also avoid running the string over small or developing fruit, as this will cause the fruit to be deformed or otherwise damaged and unmarketable.

Overhead View



Side View



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