

Alzamora RZ (35-BR1405)

Crop manual



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- HR** PVY:0,1,1.2/Tm:0-3
- IR** CMV

Variety characteristics

- Early variety
- Sets easily in dark conditions
- Very productive
- Mid-sized fruit weight

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a healthy
future



When you grow Alzamora RZ, you're onto a winner. Just like Spanish motorcyclist Emilio Alzamora won many races and always aimed for a podium position, Rijk Zwaan's Alzamora will soon outperform in your greenhouse. The variety gets off to a fast start and a good early setting. It then colours quickly and is one of the earliest peppers in terms of turning red. Every set starts earlier and is larger than we have seen from other varieties. Alzamora is really making history! All of these qualities result in a very early and very high final yield. The crop is labour-friendly and its open habit allows the usual harvesting standards to be achieved. In short: you can't lose with Alzamora!

Propagation

Alzamora grows steadily during the propagation period. Compared to other standard varieties, the young plant will seem a bit frail and thin. The crop colour is a lighter green than you're used to but this is a varietal feature. Don't rush the young plants into making big, strong, ready-to-pot plants. Our first impression of this variety is that propagation is easy and that the propagation strategy needs very little adjusting. Plant development during this phase is fast and, depending on the age of the plant being potted, is one to two days quicker than usual. Potting can be done when the plant is fairly young, i.e. as soon as the first real leaf tips become visible. That is early but, so far, we haven't seen any abnormalities during propagation.

The plant structure is fairly open and the leaves are slightly smaller than standard varieties. Alzamora lets you know when it gets too much light; the leaves curl upward, indicating that it is better to stop with light that day.

We often start the propagation with half the amount of light required. After about a week, you can give it the full amount. Depending on the level the plant can handle, this can be built up to a maximum of 16 hours a day.

The variety shows almost no purple discolouration on the stems. If the plant has assimilates left over, the leaves become savoy-like which is a signal that more speed can be achieved.

Start of cultivation

The steady-growing Alzamora can start with the usual cultivation temperatures. Depending on the age of the plant (four or seven weeks) and light conditions, the daily average temperature can be between 20.5 °C and 21.5 °C for the first few weeks.

A starting point could be 20 °C night, 21 °C day with a pre-night temperature of 19 °C or 18 °C towards the first flowering. We don't suggest using a very low pipe temperature within a 24-hour period. If you do work with low pipe temperatures for energy-saving reasons, build in a block of a higher pipe and room temperature somewhere between 10:00 and 14:00 h. A plant needs to be activated! This also applies to the use of screens/foil. A room temperature of 20 °C with a low pipe temperature is less ideal than 19 °C with a higher pipe temperature.

Compared to other standard varieties, Alzamora easily produces an early set. We therefore advise not to work with large day/night differences up to the first setting.

The first flowers may be a bit finer than usual. This is not a problem. The first fruits come naturally fast and are large.

We recommend aiming for a full, strong plant from the start of this period. This means providing a sufficiently high nutrient level (substrate EC 3.5-4.0) and a starting schedule with extra calcium (+1 mmol), extra magnesium (+0.75mmol) and iron (+25%).

Watering can be based on the dryback of the substrate, but be careful if the pipes are close to the plant, which creates more transpiration than a hanging gutter.

Heading into spring

The growth habit of Alzamora is quite open and steady. The variety develops fast naturally and sets easily. In spring, fruit weight is always sufficiently high. Most attention should be paid to producing sufficient leaves before the summer period. Do this by topping fairly quickly after two leaves and preferably by removing the fruit on the second leaf. When you prefer a larger fruit size, it will be good to remove all the fruits from the side shoots of the plant. Even though Alzamora grows quite modestly, it does have a lot of vigour. The high final yield proves this.

In general, there is no need to worry about too much growth. The variety naturally balances itself, especially with its rapid fruit setting. As with all pepper varieties, it is important not to give it a cold burst while opening the screen in the morning. The same goes for clear nights with lots of radiation. Even under closed cloth screens, the plant temperature can drop well below the room temperature. This increases the risk of internal rot and other fungi that can weaken the plant. We suggest including radiation values to control the screen.



In very bright conditions from April onwards, it may be necessary to screen against radiation peaks. Some companies have good experience with a diffuse coating, others do this with a single or double cloth screen. This differs between individuals and therefore requires customisation. For sufficient growth and fruit size in summer, the plant load should not be too high in April-May. A reasonably vigorous growth line prevents the plant load reaching 50 fruits per m². This requires the day and night to be divided somewhat more evenly: large day/night differences should be avoided. A short pre-night (e.g. of 17 °C) is never a problem, but a long day with a drawn-out warm afternoon should be avoided. The same goes for a dry climate at the end of the afternoon. This certainly does not encourage growth! An active climate should prevail in the morning; certainly no cold starts with cold heads. Pay close attention to this when opening the screens. If unexpectedly high loads occur, fruit thinning (at a young stage) could be an option.

Towards summer

The crop type is quite open. Despite this, we have no evidence (even in the hot summer of 2020) to suggest that blossom end rot and sunburn are a problem. However, due to the fairly open structure and the high fruiting rate, watering can be a concern. From April onwards, you should definitely not try to control growth with water. A dryback percentage of 5-8% is sufficient for stonewool. Especially on intense days (lean, high radiation) from late April onwards, a top-up of water in the evening or at night may be necessary. Do this with care though if the dryback rate drops quickly early in the evening. Even when watering is stopped on time in the afternoon, an extra watering in the evening can have a positive effect on root pressure, size and the prevention of bottom end rot.

To maintain sufficient vigour in the crop and a good balance during spring and the first part of summer, the substrate EC should be kept at a good level (3.5-4.0). Here, watering can be a bit more generous on brighter days so that water absorption is still guaranteed. 'Generous watering' means more frequent waterings rather than high volumes. An extra top-up could be part of this. A lot of drain is not necessary either.

By aiming for a slightly lower plant load, the fruit weight should remain constant. In the unlikely event that some lighter fruit does develop, beware of trying to improve the size by lowering the 24-hour average temperature and having large day/night differences. This increases the risk of internal rot.

Remember: ensuring sufficient growth throughout April and May provides the best chance of a good balance in the second half of the year.

Autumn

In autumn, we have seen that Alzamora can produce extra yield due to its fast setting and ripening. Last year, we were amazed by the speed of setting and outgrowth of the final set. So don't give up too quickly towards the end of the cycle! With a fast growth line, you can still gain a little extra in the final weeks. Alzamora's permanently open growth habit also results in good harvest standards.

In conclusion

This guide indicates how cultivation can be adapted to meet the varietal characteristics of Alzamora. Conditions vary from grower to grower, so each company requires customisation. Our crop specialists are on hand to provide tailor-made advice.

In 2022, Alzamora is being grown for the first time on a large scale in the Benelux. We expect to learn much more about how best to manage this variety. Together we are working towards the optimal result!



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