



Silverstone RZ

Crop manual



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 PVY:0,1,1.2/Tm:0-3

Variety characteristics

- High yield
- Good-sized fruits throughout the summer
- Vigour for four stems

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This cultivation guide describes our experiences and insights into our new productive orange bell pepper, Silverstone RZ. The growing conditions differ considerably between every nursery so here we provide the main guidelines. Customisation will always be necessary. Needless to say, our crop advisors are here to help and provide you with a tailor-made solution.

Variety characteristics

Silverstone is a vigorous orange pepper variety. It produces good-sized fruits that are on average 10 grams heavier than, for example, Jack Miller RZ. Silverstone is a strong plant with good setting behaviour. Compared with Jack Miller, this variety will set slightly less easily during the first setting but, due to its high vigour plus its good setting behaviour throughout the season, the variety is showing extreme high yields. In principle, Silverstone may be steered generatively all year round.

Propagation

Silverstone germinates quite easily and quickly if proper temperatures are maintained; that is a stable 25 °C for the first 72-96 hours. After that, the temperature can be reduced. However, maintain a higher day temperature so that the 24-hour temperature averages about 23 °C.

If you compare the plant age of Silverstone to Jack Miller, then the propagation time for a large plant is three days shorter. Silverstone also copes more easily with artificial light. It is certainly possible to gain an extra day in the propagation stage because you can use more light.

Start of the cultivation

Silverstone enters the greenhouse as a rather large and somewhat taller plant than usual. Like all varieties, Silverstone needs to establish a good root system before it can bear its load. However, it can be loaded earlier than other varieties due to its strong vigour. Thus, the first fruit can be allowed to set on one axil lower than in previous years, such as on Jack Miller. This is also because it is more difficult to control the plant generatively using temperature, for the simple reason that energy is quite costly. Therefore, to ensure setting, it is advisable to lower the pre-night temperature for Silverstone. This, of course, will depend on the sowing date chosen.

When a fixed plastic screen is used at the start of the cultivation, the pre-night will have to be a little more extreme than, for example, with a movable energy screen.

It is difficult to specify temperatures for this. Keep an eye on the buds and head of the plant and reduce the pre-night when necessary. It is important to keep the crop in check at the first setting. Make sure the first setting is not too large: one to two fruits per plant is more than enough to steer it generatively as the plant must, of course, continue to grow.

Once the first set is well established, it is possible to speed things up. However, speed will depend on the outdoor conditions. Low light levels mean moderate 24-hour temperatures and vice versa, but for the most part, let the sun do the work.

Heading into spring

Even with a high plant load Silverstone continues to grow easily. As the fruits become large and heavy, they keep the crop nicely balanced. Last season we saw that a strong plant produces even larger fruits, but at the same time growth could become too slow resulting in missed production. Try to find the right balance. It's preferable to keep the first fruit setting limited and maintain the balance, rather than the other way around. We don't want to head into the second set with the brakes on because that could result in missing out on too much production in the future. If there is suddenly a surge in regrowth, the next set will be too heavy and growth will continue to be too uneven for the rest of the season.

Summer

Coating or chalking is not immediately necessary. The variety is also strong against blossom end rot. It all depends on the condition of the crop and the area in which the nursery is located. Silverstone seems to cope with large temperature transitions quite easily but this, of course, is much easier when the crop is in balance. It is always necessary to keep a close eye on the crop and the conditions. First use a movable screen and, if this appears insufficient, a coating or chalk may be the solution.

Otherwise Silverstone requires very little special steering. Of course, due to rising energy prices, cultivation practices are changing, especially with the use of different ways to heat the greenhouse in the morning. This affects all varieties and crops. It also involves a modified way of watering, and the start and stop times are especially crucial. Regularly measure the water content in the slab and check the slab EC.



Try and keep the plant topped fairly short. Silverstone is not prone to sunburn or blossom end rot and the fruits do not hang extremely high in the crop. Topping at one leaf is no problem and Silverstone can easily handle the occasional fruit on a side branch. This comes at the expense of size, but fruits seem large enough so that's not a worry.

Beyond the longest day and for sure heading into August, it is important to keep the crop open. The variety can easily handle the combination of radiation and temperature and as a result will produce more fruits of good size. This is where gains can be made.

Nutrition

The strong growth habit requires an adequate supply of nutrition. Therefore, be sure to provide sufficient EC at the start of cultivation to achieve satisfactory crop hardiness. You can safely drip 3.5 to 4.0 mS Cc, especially with an AC film or with lots of screen usage. Aim for a slab EC of around 4.0 mS. If this creeps up a little, do not overreact. As we head towards summer we prefer to maintain the usual values for peppers, adjusted to the type of summer of course.

Conclusion

Silverstone is without doubt a top performer, and the expectations at many growers – and at Rijk Zwaan – are high. The focus during production will be mainly on energy although adjustments for this need to be made for all varieties. Some varieties will react more strongly than others.

We wish you a successful season and the anticipated high yields from Silverstone.



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