



## BOTANICAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE HOT PEPPER

((thanks to our friends of the Carmazzi company and to Massimo Biagi))

The hot pepper belongs to the solanacee genere capsicum family.

There are at least 2000 varieties. Cross-pollination is very widespread and occurs when insects move from one flower to another to feed themselves.

Every variety is indicated with the original language and dialect of the local culture, which differs from town to town and from region to region.

For these reasons the classification of hot peppers is not simple.

It already created problems for Linnaeus who was the first to try and it still creates problems for contemporary botanists.

The University of Davis in California has created the most recent classification which is the main reference point.

The capsicum type is subdivided in 5 species

### 1. *Capsicum Annuum*

Herbaceous annual cycle plant. Originally from the central part of South America. It is the most important species with sweet and spicy fruit. It is the type most often cultivated in Italy. It takes root also in pots. The most common varieties are grouped in this way:

- a) *Capsicum abbreviatum*, with small cone shaped fruit that do not grow larger than five cm.
- b) *Capsicum acuminatum*, with long, thin cone shaped fruit that is slightly curved.
- c) *Capsicum fasciculatum*, with erect fruit, thin and grouped together.
- d) *Capsicum cerasiforme*, with small round fruit similar to cherries.
- e) *Capsicum bicolor*, with two toned very small fruit, that's purple, orange and red.

### 2. *Capsicum frutescens*

A plant originating in South America, it spread first in Africa and afterwards in Europe and is a perennial with spicy fruit. The best-known varieties are *Diende de pezzo* (Columbia) *Tabasco* (Lousiana, Mexico,) *Malagueta* (Brazil).

### **3. *Capsicum chinense***

A plant originally from the Amazon, it spread first in Africa. It includes the hottest varieties in the world. *Scotch Bonnet* (Jamaica) *Congo Pepper* (Trinidad –Tobago) *Chile Habanero Yellow* (Mexico –Belize) *Chocolate Habanero* (West Indies) *Charapita* (Peru) *Azr* (India) *Red Squash* (Puerto Rico)

### **4. *Capsicum pubescens***

This species was introduced and cultivated in the Peruvian Andes. Today it is widespread above all in upper Bolivia, in Peru and in Ecuador. The best-known varieties are *Rocoto*, *Caballo*, *Canario* (Costa Rica, Mexico, Guatemala) *Rocoto Manzano* (Peru).

### **5. *Capsicum baccatum***

It comes from the dry regions of Bolivia and Peru. The best-known varieties are the *Christmas Bell* (South America) *Aji Amarilli* (Peru, Andes) *Dedo Do Moca* (Brazil) *Aji Serranito* (Peru).