History of Chillies

First cultivated by the people of Central and South America in around 3000BC.

Columbus brought seeds back to Europe in 1493, and from there it has spread to the entire world.
Climate and Soil Requirement

• Capsicums and chillies have similar requirements to tomatoes. They grow best in warm weather, but can be grown during the winter in frost-free areas.

• Deep, loamy, fertile soils rich in organic matter are preferred by the crop for satisfactory growth. Also need well drained soils with adequate soil moisture for the growth of the crop.

Types of Chillies

Several varieties of chillies which vary in shape and colour are available.

Sweet Chilli

• A chilli that is so mild you can even give it to children. About 6-8 cm long, bright yellow-lime green skin and pointed at one end.

Chilli Baby Hot

• A very hot tiny chilli 1-2 cm long. The skin colour can range from lime yellow to orange and red. Most people will find these very hot even without the seeds. Used mainly in Thai, Chinese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Indian or Spanish dishes.
Red Chilli

- Similar in size and shape to the green chilli, but with more sting to its flavour. Good idea to mix the red and green chillies together in any dish.

Bell Chilli Red/Green

- This chilli is shaped like a bell. The red ones are hot the green variety can be medium to hot and are excellent for pickling.

Mexican Hot Chilli

- One of the hottest chillies. It has a bright green skin, is 6 - 8 cm long and is pointed at one end.

Jalapeno Chilli

- The world famous chillie. This fiery hot chilli is the one by which all other chillies are judged. Ripened they can be dark green or red. They have a very thick fleshy skin and are sausage shaped with a blunt end. If you try them, beware:-( they are very hot!!!
Green Chilli

A long slender green chilli, 6-8 cm long, pointed at one end. It has a medium flavour that is easily eaten by most people who are not use to chilli.

Diseases on Chillie Peppers

- **Aphids**: (greenfly and blackfly) chillis should be checked regularly for their presence and any infestation should be dealt with by spraying with dimethoate, derris or malathion. If the chillis are ready for picking use derris.

- **Red spider mite**: Common pest in the greenhouse in hot dry conditions, causing leaf discolouration and affecting growing adversely. Spraying weekly with dimethoate and malathion can control the problem as well as creating a damp atmosphere.

- **Whitefly**: Various species of whitefly may attack the chillis causing a black deposit of sooty mould on the leaves. Try controlling with 3 to 4 sprays of pyrethrum, permethrin or pirimiphos-methyl every week.

- **Grey mould**: Irregular watering may cause brown sunken areas on the chillis which will in turn go soft and mouldy. Always keep chilli plants well spaced, well ventilated and well watered, always removing dead or dying plants leaves or stems.

- **Leaves yellowing**: nutrient deficiency, give the plants a liquid feed such as seaweed.
Worldwide chillies exports

- India 25%
- China 24%
- Spain 17%
- Mexico 8%
- Pakistan 7.2%
- Morocco 7%
- Turkey 4.5%

Sri Lanka Chillies
• Major chilli growing districts are Anuradhapura, Moneragala, Ampara, Vauniya, Kurunegala, Hambantota and Mahaweli System H.

• Chilli has become an essential ingredient in Sri Lankan meals.

• Per capita consumption of chilli in the form of dry chilli is estimated 2.32 kg per annum and the national annual requirement of dry chilli is around 40,000 mt.

• The annual production of dry chilli is about 15,000 Mt, 25,000 Mt is to be imported (Year 2001 figures).

• Chilli contributes on an average Rs.750 millions to GDP and creates employment of 14 million work days annually.

Production and Imports of Chillies (1988 – 2001)
Sowing Seeds

• Place the seeds after sterilization of soil- in rows.
• Seed treatment is essential to prevent diseases – 80% captan can be use.
• Sow the seeds in rows – spacing 10-15 cm between rows at the depth of 1cm
• Put mulch on seed bed
• Daily watering – Germination of seeds take about 7-10 days
• Remove and place the mulch in between rows after seedlings appeared.
• Put fungicides if the seedlings affected by fungal diseases like, Wilt, foot rot and damping off
• Weeding – Hand weeding
• Hardening the seedings – Limit water supply 7-10 days before planting
• 35 days old seedlings suitable for planting

It takes 3 to 4 months for a crop to mature. Capsicums can be used at the green or red-ripe stage. If they are to be picked green, allow them to reach full size and the skin to change from light to dark green. Harvest chillies when they have fully ripened and coloured.
Chillie types from Sri Lanka

- Department of Agriculture has recommended 5 chilli varieties namely MI–1, MI-2, KA–2, Arunalu and MI – Hot.

Nutritional value of Chillies

- Chillies are high in vitamin C (about twice that of citrus fruits) Even after cooking it only loses 30 percent of its vitamin C.
- Dried chillies are very high in vitamin A
- Red chillies are a great source of β-carotene.
- Chillies have antibacterial qualities, and contain bioflavinoids, anti-oxidants most common in apple juice.
- It is effective in protecting against cancer.
- Capsaicin cream is used to lower the sensation of pain in such conditions as arthritis, and other painful chronic conditions.
Major Side Effects

• The eyes and mucous tissues are especially sensitive to capsicum. It can cause irritation, temporary blindness, and visual disturbances, if it gets into the eyes.

• The nose, mouth, and throat can also be irritated by exposure to capsicum.

• Taken in a very high amount or for extensive periods of time, capsicum may also cause inflammation of the stomach or intestines.

• In rare cases, liver and/or kidney damage has been reported from excessive oral use.

Cooling Down Afterwards

The hottest part of the chilli is the membrane and the seeds attached to it. Small chillies are hotter because they contain proportionally more seeds and membrane. If the heat gets to you and your mouth is burning, don't be tempted to drink water as this can intensify the effect in the short term. To get rid of the heat, have one of the following:

· Salt, common table salt (this the best);
· Milk;
· Yoghurt;
· Cucumber;
· A couple of mint leaves; or
· Yoghurt with chopped mint;
References

- http://www.asiarecipe.com - Asia Recipe.com
- http://www.users.orac.net.au/~mhumphry/chillies

THANK YOU