

Preface

Paprika is a leading vegetable crop in Hungary. Its production and consumption rank it with the tomato. It is a favourite throughout the year and is used in a variety of ways—fresh, cooked, canned, pickled, pureed, or ground.

Paprika growing has a several hundred-year-old tradition in Hungary. In the present century, Hungarian experts have made particular efforts to improve production methods. Scientific and technical publications on paprika are rather considerable in number.

In all likelihood this contributed to the fact that the Hungarian name "paprika" has entered the vocabulary of many nations.

Together with the increasing importance of vegetable consumption the world over, paprika, too, has attracted more attention due to its multifarious use and great nutritional value. The exceptionally high vitamin C content of paprika is well known—indeed, in this regard it ranks first among vegetable crops and has only few rivals among fruit species.

These factors contributed to an interest in an English translation of my work, which was first published in Hungarian in the Monograph Series of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Section of Agricultural Sciences, in 1966, revised and enlarged in 1981. Understandably, the Hungarian editions, together with numerous recent publications on new research and practical experience, were largely inaccessible to experts elsewhere due to the language problem.

In the present edition, emphasis is placed on the investigation and production development work carried out by the author and his associates at the Institute for Vegetable Growing of the University of Horticulture, Budapest, and on the results of other Hungarian institutes engaged in studying paprika. Particular attention has been paid to the role of the most important ecological factors in paprika growing, i.e., light, heat, water and nutrients.

The description of cultivars focuses on the main characteristics of Hungarian-bred varieties. Due to the successful work of our breeders, exclusively Hungarian varieties have been grown in recent decades.

A special chapter has been devoted to paprika diseases and pests and their control.

Paprika growing in Hungary includes the cultivation of the crop both as a vegetable and as a condiment plant. The former, discussed under the name "vegetable paprika" (often referred to as "green pepper"), means paprika used for raw consumption, in making dishes, and for processing into canned and pickled forms. Then there is what is called "spice paprika" (red pepper), the production of varieties suitable for making paprika powder and other seasonings of the biologically mature fruit.

Spice paprika is grown exclusively outdoors. Outdoor production has two main trends: large-scale production in the field, mainly for the processing industry, and production for the early market by intensive cultivation methods. Protected growing (sometimes also called hothousing) is mostly carried out under large plastic sheets and to a lesser degree in glasshouses. All production methods developed on the basis of Hungarian research and practical experience are discussed in the present edition. It has been intended to give an overview of the work of Hungarian experts engaged in the research, breeding and production of paprika. We hope it will focus attention to the crop in countries where it has had little importance so far and thereby encouraging paprika production and consumption in new areas.

And, lastly, I wish to thank all those who assisted in bringing out this English edition.

The Author