

## Peter Piper picked a peck of money

LITIZ — Peppers are a valuable home garden vegetable.

Dr. Charles Korns, Professor of Horticulture at Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, reported an incredible pepper crop despite record-breaking drought and heat.

From 25 plants of the new Gypsy yellow hybrid pepper Dr. Korns harvested a total of 1,700 fruits, an average of 68 peppers per plant, most in the three-to-four inch size range.

Fruits of this size would average three ounces each, bringing the total weight of the harvest to more than 300 pounds. At the average grocery store retail value of sweet peppers from summer through fall of fifty cents per pound, the total value of the crop would have exceeded \$150, or \$6 per plant.

Pepper plants are rather small. The 25 plants occupied less than 100 square feet of garden space. Thus, the value of peppers harvested per square foot would have been, conservatively speaking, in excess of \$1.50.

If you'd like to try to exceed Dr. Korns' record, here's how he went about planting the crop.

Granular 12-12-12 fertilizer was incorporated at the rate of ten pounds per 1,000 square feet prior to planting. After frost danger the pepper seedlings were trans-

planted to the garden and mulched with straw.

They were watered as needed and fertilized once more in late June at the rate of 1/2 ounce soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer per gallon of water. The seeds were started indoors eight weeks prior to transplanting to the garden.

Dr. Korns described their 1980 weather. The heat and drought were the worst in years. We had approximately 25 straight days of temperatures of 95 degrees, and many of these were over 100 degrees. Extreme drought accompanied the heat.

This didn't seem to faze the peppers as they continued to produce peppers at a phenomenal rate. We picked the first peppers June 6, and by October 1, we had picked a total of 1,700 peppers from 25 plants.

We had people try these peppers, and most found them to have excellent flavor. The identity of the variety and the developer was kept secret to eliminate bias.

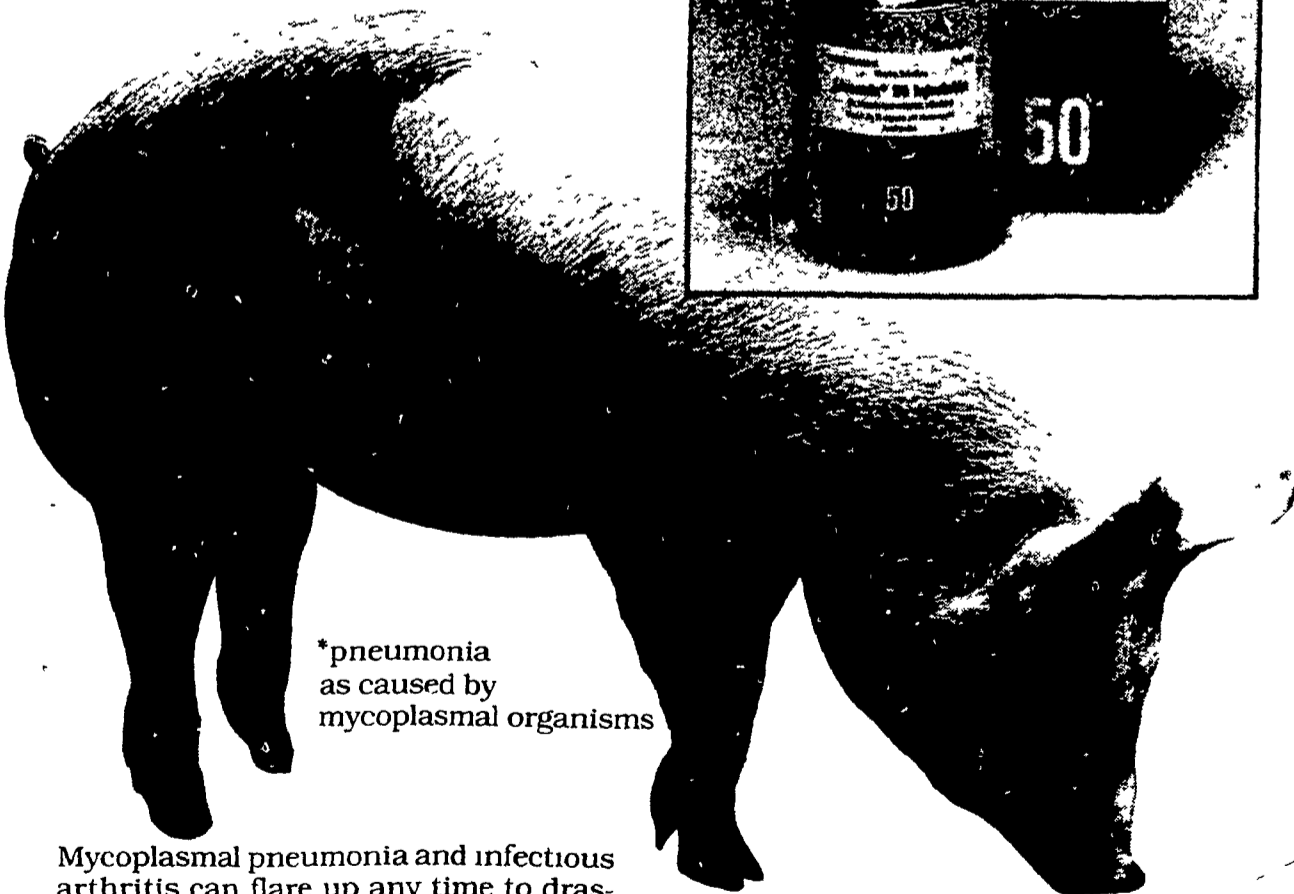
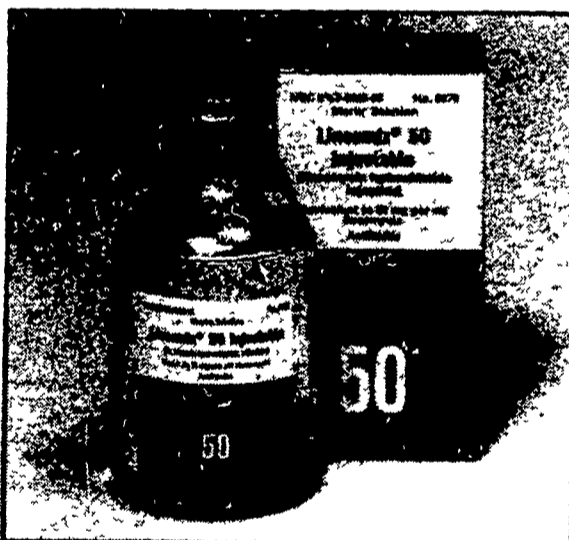
Gypsy could possibly be an excellent patio plant for people who have a little garden space.



Peppers come in a variety of size and colors. Grow square ones, round ones, long ones, or short ones. Add them to a salad to make it crunchy and colorful.

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