

Crop manual Stayer RZ (35-219 RZ)

Plant raisers

When primed, the plants have their usual number of growing days and they are more open.

Growers

When the plants are delivered, Stayer RZ (35-219 RZ) does not immediately stand out, but after just one week you will already notice the slightly open character of the variety. Keep temperatures level a little bit longer than you would normally, adjusting the 24-hour temperature in line with the light, of course. When the stems are beginning to show and grow, a slightly more generative climate can be aimed for quite soon. Stayer may give large flowers but the fruit shape is good.

When Stayer is given a more generative climate, we like to see an afternoon increase and the night not too cold. The 24-hour temperature does not have to be high, though. This also depends on the amount of light as well, of course. Example: 18°C pre-midnight; 18°C night; 20°C day light and 22 - 24°C afternoon increase. Depending on the light this will work out at a 24-hour temperature of 18 - 19°C+ in the period before the first fruit set. So as the days lengthen and the light increases, the day temperature is realised for longer and the 24-hour temperature gradually creeps up without causing a drawn or perhaps too vegetative crop.

Once setting is well and truly a fact it is then necessary, of course, to make speed again - always in combination with the available light. At the moment that means 24-hour temperatures of around 20°C. Stayer is no different from other varieties in this respect. It achieves its balance quickly and also shows its second fruit set quickly. The peppers colour quickly and evenly.

"Today you would not think there was anything to pick yet and tomorrow you see nothing but yellow fruit." (this comment was made more than once by the triallers).

Once it has found its balance, Stayer needs a fast growing regime with the night not too cold. Example: pre-midnight temperature 18/18.5°C, night 19°C and day 20.5 - 22°C +2°C for light.

With significant changes in the weather from sunny to rainy or dark weather it is important to always strive for an active climate on those rainy or dark days: use a fair pipe temperature in the afternoon to achieve this. Also watch the moisture deficit closely: do not let it drop below 3.5 and during the night preferably not below 2.0.

Conversely, when the weather changes from dark to sunny it is important not to create a 'close' climate. On sunny days we would rather see the screen open than closed and aim for an afternoon temperature that is as low as possible; by that we mean, of course, no higher than 26°C.

Because Stayer has a reasonable amount of foliage and this can be taken into account when topping (e.g. top at 2 leaves), we would rather see the vents open and a little bit of wind entering the glasshouse than the screen closed for 75 - 80% and a warm, moist but - more particularly - dead climate. Stayer is not very susceptible to blossom-end rot but could show the odd split if it is given a dead, warm climate. This may be kept to a minimum, however, with a more active climate and picking the peppers more frequently.

Because of its vigour, Stayer may well look slightly chlorotic during the first part of the cropping period (pH on the high side). We have not seen any detrimental effects of this, though. A little bit of steering is a good option, of course. Some extra NH₄⁺ is allowed, as Stayer is strong against blossom-end rot. Because this occurs very early in the year, blossom-end rot is not a problem anyway. Extra red iron also definitely contributes to a slightly darker crop colour. Stayer shows that it is a labour-friendly crop quite soon. The sideshoots develop more slowly and this gives significantly less topping work. Our triallers have already experienced this.

Due to its slightly larger leaves it is not a problem that there are fewer tops. It certainly does not make Stayer any more susceptible to sunburn than other varieties. Towards the summer the leaves can look a little spiralled. This does not have any ill effects, but topping at one extra leaf helps to prevent that the fruits start turning orangy (with extreme light). An extra leaf from mid-May to mid-July is an option here; using the screen also helps. In spite of the fast growing regime, Stayer keeps giving large, but more especially very heavy, fruits. This is good for picking performance but certainly also for the production. After the longest day Stayer can, however, continue to give fruit set even with less light. This may result in the fruit load being quite high towards August, which is not great as far as size is concerned. One option is, in that case, to thin the fruits on quality during pruning work.

Crop team Peppers Rijk Zwaan, January 2010.

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