

NYAWA 2012





Pepper - the oldest and still most important culinary condiment known to man. Of the 1,200 species of *Piper*, a genus native to the tropics, around 400 have been recorded from Malesia. *Piper nigrum*, the most commonly cultivated, is native to India. Pepper was brought to South-east Asia by Hindu monks around 2000 years ago. In the Middle Ages, *P. nigrum* and Chilli peppers slowly replaced other types of pepper.

Old, to Some Gold – Pepper or the Fruit as Spice

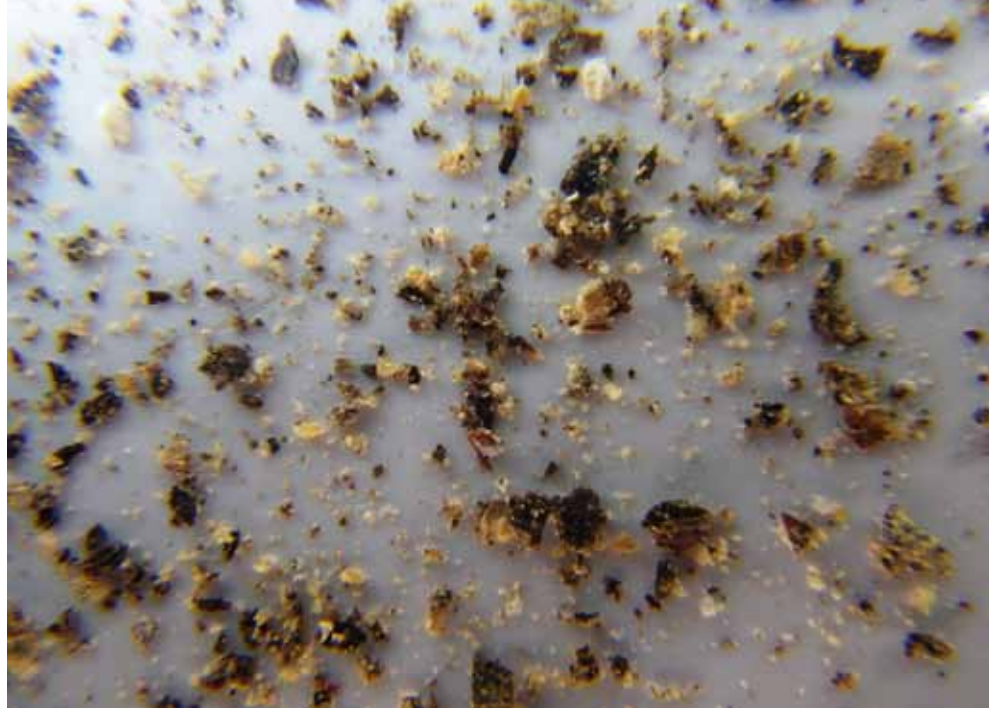
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The ensuing quest for new, cheaper sources of pepper swept the Europeans into a frenzy of exploration later to be known as “The Age

of Discovery”. Japanese settlers introduced pepper plants to Brazil in the 1930s; the country still maintains a major share in the global market today.





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Today pepper is a sophisticated, versatile spice: black peppercorns - mature but unripe fruits, sun-dried to turn them black; strongest in pungency and flavour; white peppercorns - ripe berries, red outer skin is removed revealing the white seed that is bleached in the sun; milder in flavour; red peppercorns - ripe berries with outer skin intact; rare and expensive; and green peppercorns - plucked unripe, brined, pickled, freeze-dried or dehydrated; flavour and pungency is less than white peppercorns. Pink pepper and other condiments using the term pepper, are not related to the true peppers, but used in similar ways.





Photo by: SALEHA HARON