

Questions 11-19

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What is commonly called pepper in reality comes from two very different families of plants.

Black and white pepper both come from the fruit of the *Piper nigrum*, a vine with thin, called peppercorns. The peppercorns turn from green to red as they ripen and finally blacken as they dry out. The dried-out peppercorns are ground to obtain black pepper. White pepper, which has a more subtle flavor than black pepper, comes from the same peppercorns as black pepper; to obtain white pepper, the outer hull of the peppercorn, the pericarp, is removed before the peppercorn is ground. Black pepper is a member of the ginger family, the Zingiberaceae, and is a completely different family from black

Red and green peppers, on the other hand, come from a completely different family from black and white pepper. Red and green peppers are from the genus *Capiscum*. Plants of this type generally have tiny white flowers and fruit which can be any one of a number of colors, shapes, and sizes. These peppers range in flavor from very mild and sweet to the most incredibly burning taste imaginable. Bell peppers are the most mild, while habaneros are the most burning.

Christopher Columbus is responsible for the present-day confusion over what a pepper is. The *Piper nigrum* variety of pepper was highly valued for centuries, and high demand for pepper by Europeans was a major cause of the fifteenth-century push to locate ocean routes to the spice-growing regions of Asia. When Columbus arrived in the New World in 1492, he was particularly interested in finding black pepper because of the high price that it would command in Europe.

Columbus came across plants from the *Capiscum* family in use among the people of the New World, and he incorrectly identified them as relatives of black pepper. Columbus introduced the spicy *Capiscum* chili peppers to Europeans on his return from the 1492 voyage, and traders later spread them to Asia and Africa. These *Capiscum* peppers have continued to be called peppers in spite of the fact that they are not related to the black and white pepper of the *Piper nigrum* family.

11. The purpose of this passage is to

14. What part of the *Piper nigrum* is the pericarp?

(A) explain why there is confusion today

(B) provide the scientific classification of over peppers

(C) demonstrate that it was Columbus

(D) who brought peppers to Europe classify the variety of sizes, shapes,

12. The word "turn" in line 3 could best be

replaced by

(A) revert

(C) Ver

(D) change

13. According to the passage, both black and white peppers

(A) come from different plants

(B) change colors after they are ground
(C) are ground from dried out

(D) peppercorns have the same flavor

(A) shove
(B) strength
(C) drive
(D) hit

16. The word "push" in line 14 could best be replaced by

(A) The color of the flower
(B) The size of the fruit
(C) The shape of the fruit
(D) The color of the fruit

15. What usually does NOT vary in a *Capsicum* plant?

(A) The seed inside the fruit
(B) The outer covering of the fruit
(C) The pulp inside the vine
(D) The outer covering of the vine

pericarp?