



Growing Green Peas at Home

Most peas require 50 to 80 days from planting to maturity or first harvest.

- Peas thrive in cool, moist weather. Early plantings in the spring tend to produce larger yields compared with plantings later in the season.
- Western Washington home gardeners should choose varieties that need fewer days.
- Check the back of seed packets for specific information about the seeds enclosed.

Two Types of Peas:

- Peas with inedible pods, such as shelling (garden) peas.
- Peas with edible pods which are slightly sweeter, crisper, and typically do not need to be shelled.
 - Snow peas (flat pod type used in stir fry).
 - Sugar snap peas which have a plump pod.

Two Types of Pea Plants:

- Bush peas are freestanding plants.
- Pole peas are vining plants that will need support such as netting, a trellis, or “teepee” structure.

Soil Requirements for Peas:

- Soil temperature should be at least 50 degrees.
- The soil should be dry enough to work in without it sticking to garden tools.
- Peas grow best in fertile, well-drained soils that contain organic matter and get full sun exposure during the day.

Planting Peas:

- Can be sown directly outdoors using certified seed from seed catalogs or garden stores.
 - Plant seed 1 inch apart and 1 inch deep along a straight line.
- Can be started in the home or greenhouse 10 to 14 days before transplanting the seedlings.
- The spacing of the bush pea plantings should be 2 to 4 inches apart in rows 2 feet apart.
- Vining peas should be placed 2 to 4 inches apart in rows 3 feet apart.
 - Plant 6 to 8 seeds around the base of a circular “teepee” trellis, or
 - 1 inch apart along a straight-line trellis, with 3 feet spacing between trellises.
- Planting peas in pots is possible but the number of plants will be limited by the size of the pot.

Integrated Pest Management Considerations:

- Check young pea plants 2 to 3 times a week to make sure they are getting off to a good start.
- Investigate if seeds do not germinate or germinate unevenly.
 - Possible problems include seeds planted too deep, in too cold or soggy soil, using old seed, pest-damaged seed, etc.
 - Look for signs of disease, insects, or pests.
- Most problems with peas can be avoided by proper watering, weeding, and cleaning of beds.
 - Powdery mildew can be a problem.
 - Avoid overhead watering.
 - Remove diseased or dying plants.
 - Remove weeds and debris.

- Complete loss of young plants may be due to root rot, slugs, or rabbits.
 - Plant in well-drained soil to avoid root rot.
 - Remove slugs or cautiously use iron phosphate-based baits which are safer for pets.
 - Chicken wire may be placed around the plants to protect them from rabbits.
- Pea flowers are dependent on bees for pollination, so minimize pesticide use during flower bloom.
- Do not replant peas in the same location more often than every third year.
 - Soil borne pathogens that affect peas can remain in the soil for a couple of years.

Resources:

WSU Soil Temperature Guide:

<https://weather.wsu.edu/?p=89750>

Vegetables: Growing Green Peas in Home Gardens. WSU Extension Fact Sheet FS116E:

<https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/growing-green-peas-in-the-home-garden-home-garden-series>

WSU Hortsense Fact Sheets for pest issues:

<http://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/Search/SeachByPlantCategory.aspx>

*Prepared by WSU – Snohomish County Extension Master Gardeners
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