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

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