



**CORNELL
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION OF
ONEIDA COUNTY**

HOME GROWN FACTS

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GROWING PEAS

Also known as garden peas, shelling peas, snap peas, sugar peas, sugar snap peas, snow peas, Chinese peas, edible-podded peas. Like sweet corn, peas are at their tastiest immediately after harvest. Whether you choose shell or edible-pod peas, they grow best during spring and early summer when temperatures are between 60 F to 75 F

Site Characteristics

Sunlight:

- full sun
- part shade

Yields best in full sun.

Soil conditions:

- requires well-drained soil

Prefers well-drained soil, average fertility, high in organic matter with pH 6.0 to 7.0. Widely adapted, but prefers cool, damp weather. Good soil structure is important. Avoid compacting soil by working it when it's still too wet.

Plant Traits

Lifecycle: annual

Ease-of-care: easy

Height: 1 to 8 feet

Spread: 0.5 to 1 feet

Bloom time:

- mid-spring
- late spring
- early summer
- mid-summer

Flower color:

- violet
- white

Foliage color:

- light green
- blue-green

Foliage texture: fine

Leafless varieties are particularly fine.

Shape: climbing / vine

Shape in flower: same as above

Helping You Put Knowledge to Work

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associations, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

Special Considerations

Tolerates:

- frost - Can tolerate moderate freezes. Less sensitive to freezing in spring than in fall. Light damage to shoots can actually encourage more secondary shoots and result in more pods per plant.

Special characteristics:

- not native to North America - Domesticated by Neolithic farmers in the Near East at least 8,000 to 9,000 years ago.

Special uses:

- edible landscaping

Growing Information

How to plant:

Propagate by seed

Germination temperature: 40 F to 85 F - Optimum around 75 F.

Days to emergence: 9 to 13 - 9 days when soil is 60 F. 13 days at 50 F. May take as long as 4 to 5 weeks at 40 F.

Seed can be saved 3 years.

Maintenance and care:

Sow seed in spring as soon as you can work the soil - as early as late March or early April depending on how quickly the soil warms and dries. Peas planted in cold soil (40 F) are slow to germinate. Later plantings made when the soil is warmer (60 F or more) often catch up quickly with earlier plantings. Use raised beds if your soil is slow to drain.

Make additional plantings through early- to mid- May, or plant varieties with different maturity dates to increase the harvest period.

Plant seeds 1 to 2 inches deep, 1 to 4 inches apart in rows 18 inches apart. Or sow about 1 inch apart in a 3-inch-wide band (about 25 seeds per foot). Shallow planting is best when soils are cool and wet. Plant deeper if soil is dry. A quick way to seed is to make a furrow or trench with a hoe, place seed in the furrow, cover and firm. Do not thin.

Erect trellis for tall-growing, vining types at planting using chicken wire, brush or other suitable trellis material. If trellising, increase row spacing to 4 to 6 feet.

Keep soil moist, but avoid heavy watering during flowering, which can interfere with pollination.

Intercrop peas with fast-growing cool-season crops such as spinach or radishes. After final harvest, follow with late squash plantings or fall-harvested cool-season crops such as broccoli, leeks or potatoes.

Sow fall crops about 8 to 10 weeks before first frost date. Fall crops can be disappointing if hot weather persists. Powdery-mildew-resistant varieties are best for fall crops.

Do not use high-nitrogen fertilizers. Too much nitrogen will result in lush foliage but poor flowering and fruiting. Inoculation with rhizobia bacteria may be beneficial if peas have not been grown in the past.

Do not plant peas in the same place more than once in every 4 years. Avoid planting where in places where peas have suffered before from root rot.

Pests:

Aphids - A hard stream of water can be used to remove aphids from plants. Wash off with water occasionally as needed early in the day. Check for evidence of natural enemies such as gray-brown or bloated parasitized aphids and the presence of alligator-like larvae of lady beetles and lacewings.

Seedcorn maggot - Avoid heavy manure or organic matter in the garden as they attract maggot flies and encourage egg laying.

Diseases:

Seed decay and seedling root rot - Locate new plants in a part of the garden different from previous year's location. If that is not possible, remove infested soil and replace with fresh soil. Plant as early as possible. Improve soil drainage.

Wilt - Locate new plants in a part of the garden different from previous year's location. If that is not possible, remove infested soil and replace with fresh soil. Plant as early as possible. Improve soil drainage

Powdery mildew - Avoid wetting foliage if possible. Water early in the day so aboveground plant parts will dry as quickly as possible. Avoid crowding plants. Space apart to allow air circulation. Eliminate weeds around plants and garden area to improve air circulation. Practice plant sanitation. When plants are not wet, carefully remove and destroy or discard affected plant parts. In autumn, rake and dispose of all fallen or diseased leaves and fruit.

Varieties

Varieties fall into three major groups:

Shell peas (var. *sativum*): You remove the peas from the fibrous pod. Some varieties (petite pois) are bred to be picked when small.

Edible-podded peas (var. *macrocarpon*): You eat the plump pods and peas together. Often called snap peas. Snow peas belong to this group, but have flat pods.

Dry peas or field peas (var. *arvense*): You allow these to mature and harden, then dry, store and cook for soups and other dishes.

Look for different maturity dates and heights. Some bush varieties grow just 1 to 2 feet tall and need little or no support. Bush varieties produce a determinate number of flowers and fruit. Viny types may grow 5 to 6 feet or more and need trellising for good yields and easy picking. They continue producing an indeterminate number of flowers and fruit over a prolonged period.

If growing fall crops, look for powdery-mildew-resistant varieties.

Some varieties recommended for New York include:

Early shell: Knight, Little Marvel, Maestro, Novella II, Olympia, Progress No. 9, Sparkle,

Late shell: . Bolero, Frosty, Green Arrow, Lincoln, Mr. Big, Wando,

Snow pea: Dwarf Gray Sugar, Little Sweetie, Mammoth Melting Sugar, Oregon Sugar Pod II

Edible pod (Snap) pea: Early Snap, Sugar Ann, Sugar Snap, Super Sugar Mel

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