

GROWING PEAS

Peas are a frost resistant, cool weather crop that should be planted around the end of March or as soon as the soil can be worked. Grow peas on a support of some type as they are vining in habit.

Peas grow best in a well drained soil. To improve drainage in a clay soil, add organic matter such as compost, leaves, or grass clippings. Do not give peas too much nitrogen fertilizer. Make sure peas get plenty of water, especially when pods are forming. Pick ripe pods regularly or production will decrease.

Non-edible podded peas have tender sweet seeds which may number up to 12 per pod. They are used for fresh cooking, canning, and freezing. Some good varieties, all maturing in about 63 days, include: Freezonia, Greater Progress, Knight, and Frosty. Wando and Lincoln, maturing in about 68 days, are good varieties to withstand hot temperatures.

Edible podded peas such as snow peas or snap peas are those in which both the seed and pod can be eaten. If you are growing snow peas for the pod, pick them before the seed matures or the pod will be tough. Try the quick maturing Snowbird or Snowflake, both maturing in about 58 days.

The pod of snap peas is still edible when the peas have matured. They can be used in 3 ways: as a snow pea when immature, as a non-edible podded pea, or like a snap bean. Some good varieties include: Sugar Bon and Sugar Ann maturing in 57 days or the original snap pea, Sugar Snap, maturing in 69 days.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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