SOILS:

Sands and sandy loam soils which warm up rapidly in the spring are preferred for early crops; heavier, moisture-retaining soils are desirable for mid-season crops. Avoid soils which compact and crust readily.

VARIETIES:

Before selecting a variety, consider requirements of your market. If your peas are to be sold for processing, find out the buyer's variety preference.

World's Record (59 days). A standard first-early variety for fresh market and home garden use, producing moderately good yields of large, tender, dark green peas of very sweet flavor. The variety is fully resistant to fusarium wilt, with somewhat darker pods than older strains. Plants 32"; indeterminate, medium heavy, with light green foliage. Pods 3½"; medium green, straight, pointed, broad, plump, single; 7 to 9 peas. Seeds: 1,440 per lb.

Progress No. 9 (60 days). A standard early maturing, large-podded variety for fresh market and home garden use. Plants 20"; dark green, determinate, very compact, vigorous, fairly productive. Pods 3½ to 4"; single, dark green, broad, slightly curved, pointed, well filled; 6 to 8 relatively large dark green peas of acceptable flavor and tenderness. Seeds: 1,400 per lb.
Laxton (62 days). An early maturing variety for freezing and home garden use, developed from the old standard Thomas Laxton, which it generally resembles for plant, pod, and berry type, but resistant to fusarium wilt and a day later in maturity. Plant 38''; indeterminate, vigorous, medium dark green, holding up well in the field. Pods 2 to 3½, single, straight, blunt, medium dark green, and well filled, containing 7 to 8 tender, dark green peas of very sweet flavor, 5.42 average sieve size. Seeds: 1,600 per lb.

Freezer 69 (62 days). A high yielding, early maturing variety, comparable to Freezer 37 in plant, pod type, yield potential, and excellent quality, but more widely adapted, with slightly taller vines, averaging 36'', and slightly small berry size. In comparative trials, where Freezer 37 has shown a significant degree of skin-splitting, Freezer 69 has been almost entirely free of that condition. Pods 3'', mostly double, slightly curved, blunt, containing 6 to 7 peas of excellent flavor, 3.55 average sieve size. Seeds: 1,920 per lb.

Little Marvel (64 days). A standard early mid-season variety for home garden and fresh market use. Plants 24'', determinate, compact, vigorous, dark green, producing good yields of medium small pods, single, and double. Pods 2½ to 3'', dark green, straight, blunt, plump, well filled with 6 to 8 medium-sized, dark green peas, of excellent table quality. Seeds: 1,775 per lb.

Alpine (66 days). An early mid-season variety of Dark Skin Perfection type, developed for freezing. Plants 31'', determinate, stocky, vigorous, resistant to fusarium wilt; highly double podded. Pods 3½'', straight, blunt, containing 6 to 7 dark green peas of excellent quality, concentrated largely in the medium sieve sizes averaging 3.96. Seeds: 2,000 per lb.

**FERTILIZING:**

Soils must be well drained to produce a satisfactory crop of green peas.

On sands and sandy loams, use 500 lbs. of 10-10-10 fertilizer per acre. On silt and clay loams, use 800 lbs. of 5-10-5 per acre. On all soils where peas are broadcast, double the amount of fertilizer.

On all soils, drill the fertilizer in deeply with a fertilizer-grain drill or similar equipment in a separate operation before planting the seed.
LIME REQUIREMENTS:

Desired soil pH for pea production is from 5.5 to 6.5. If the soil is very acid, correct by applying lime. Do not overlime because too much lime may be as bad as too little. Always have a soil test made well before planting to determine the amount of lime required.

PLANTING:

Time - In Norfolk and Eastern Shore sections the spring crop is usually planted in February and March and the fall crop from late August to mid-September. In southwest Virginia, the usual planting time is from early March to the middle of April.

Spacing - Plant in rows 2' to 3' apart, using 75 to 100 lbs. of seed per acre. Seed should be about 2' apart in the row.

Method - Use a 2-row planter, placing seed 2" deep in light soils or 1½" in heavy soils. If possible, use a planter that places fertilizer in bands and plants seed in one operation, if peas are grown in rows.

CHEMICAL WEED, INSECT, AND DISEASE CONTROL:

Recommendations for chemical control of diseases, insects and weeds are given in the current VPI Pesticide Handbook. See your county Extension agent or local pesticide dealer for this information.

WEED CONTROL:

Mechanical - Peas should be kept free of weeds by a sufficient number of shallow cultivations. Discontinue cultivation before the plants become large enough to be injured by the operation.

DISEASE CONTROL:

To protect seed from insects and soil-borne disease organisms, purchase treated seed. These seed cost slightly more than non-treated, but the cost is considerably less than when treated at the farm. If seeds are treated at the farm, commercial mixtures of insecticides and fungicides are available.

Anthracnose and bacterial blight may be reduced by rotation and by using seed produced in semi-arid western areas. Pea mosaic and powdery mildew may be partly controlled by using resistant varieties. Root rot may be partially controlled by rotation and good cultural practices to maintain vigorous growth.

HARVESTING:

Peas should be harvested just as the pods fill out and while the seeds are sweet and tender. Peas may be hand-picked although on farms where peas are produced for processing, mechanical harvesters are normally used.