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virginia home food production



PEAS

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

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MH 412

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

LIGHT: sun, tolerates shade in summer

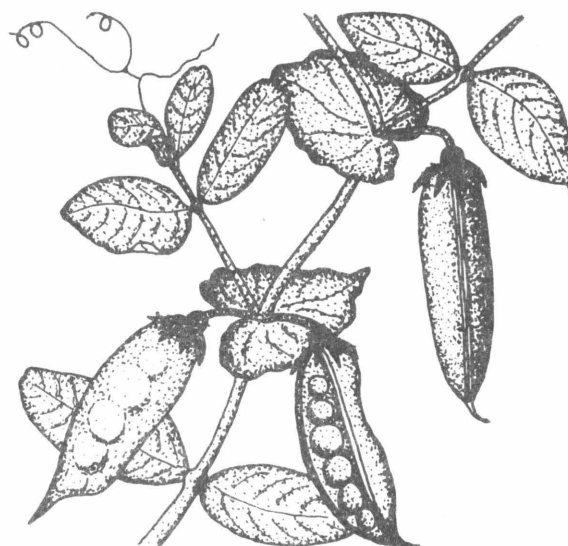
SOIL: well-drained, light

FERTILITY: medium-rich

pH: 6.0 - 7.5

TEMPERATURE: cool (55-70°F)

MOISTURE: moist, but not water-logged



CULTURE

PLANTING: seed in early spring as soon as the soil is workable. Inoculating seeds with powdered nitrogen-fixing bacteria may increase yields on new land.

SPACING: 1-3" x 12-30"
(6-10" between double rows)

HARDINESS: hardy annual

FERTILIZER NEEDS: light-medium feeder, excess nitrogen delays flowering, plants fix nitrogen once established, sidedress after heavy bloom and set of pods (1½ oz. (33-0-0) per 10 feet of row)

CULTURAL PRACTICES:

The three main types of peas used in the home garden are English peas or garden peas, edible podded peas, Southern pea or cowpea or black-eyed pea. The southern pea is a warm-season crop grown in the same manner as beans. It is in a different genus.

Garden peas or English peas are the more widely used peas and have either smooth or wrinkle seeded varieties. Wrinkle seeded varieties tend to be sweeter than smooth varieties.

Edible podded peas or Chinese pod peas or snow peas can be eaten without shelling. Pick when the peas are just beginning to form in the pod. Pods should be tender. The whole pea may

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be prepared in a similar manner as green beans but will not need as much cooking.

Peas are frost-hardy and prefer cool, moist weather. Early spring or fall sowings do best. Some varieties show resistance to heat, but partial shading may be necessary during summer heat. Mulching with organic matter can also help to keep soil cool.

Avoid direct contact of germinating seeds or seedlings with chemical fertilizers. Peas have a low salt tolerance and are easily injured. Careful, shallow cultivation is also important.

Dwarf and most intermediate varieties are self-supporting, however, twigs and branches may be stuck into the ground adjacent to the rows for some support. Taller varieties will need poles, trellises, or fencing to grow on. By encouraging the pea vine to climb up the supports, peas and foliage are lifted off the ground, resulting in less disease problems and easier picking.

COMMON PROBLEMS

DISEASES: fusarium wilt, root-rot

INSECTS: seed maggot, pea weevil, aphids

CULTURAL: poor germination (cold, wet soils) poor flowering (excessive vegetative growth from too much nitrogen) poor bloom set (too hot temperatures)

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

	<u>Grams</u>	<u>Calories</u>
Green peas, 1 c. cooked	160	110
	<u>% U.S. RDA</u>	
<u>Vitamin A</u>	<u>Vitamin C</u>	<u>Thiamin</u>
15	60	30
		<u>Iron</u>
		15
<u>Riboflavin</u>	<u>Niacin</u>	
10	20	

HARVESTING AND STORAGE

DAYS TO MATURITY: 55 - 75

HARVEST: Garden peas when pods are filled in and eat while peas are still tender and sweet. High temperature causes rapid loss of sugar content. Smaller ones are tastier than larger ones. Edible podded peas should be picked as soon as peas are perceptible bumps inside the pods.

APPROXIMATE YIELDS: (per 10 feet of row) 2 - 5 lb.

AMOUNT TO RAISE PER PERSON: 5-8 pounds

STORAGE: cool (32°F), moist (95% RH) conditions, 1-3 weeks

PRESERVATION: can or freeze