



SOUP PEAS

Pisum sativum

Soup peas are very easy and satisfying to grow, thrive in our cool climate and provide yet another easy-to-store vegetable protein to add variety to our winter diet.

PLANTING

Plant peas in April. Peas require moderate fertility only, although they thrive in well-drained, rich, sandy, alkaline soil. Adding an inoculant is beneficial, especially if planting in an area that has not had peas in recent years. Pole peas require a trellis and range from 3-6' tall. Plant bush peas in blocks. We used 2" seed spacing in rows 18" apart. Plant pole peas in a single row with seeds 2-3" apart. Peas tolerate crowding and can be planted as close as 1" apart with rows 2" apart. Plant seed 1" deep.

GROWING METHODS

MAINTENANCE

You can typically get by without watering early-planted peas, as they mature during our drought season. However, they require even moisture during flowering and pod set. Weed peas a few times. Be sure to regularly tie up trellised peas if necessary. Peas otherwise require minimal maintenance.

HARVEST

Peas should be ready to harvest in early to mid August, or when the pods are dry. Simply cut down or pull up the vines to harvest.

THRESHING

Be sure the seed is dry enough that a fingernail can't make a mark before threshing. Throw the entire mass of vines and pods onto a tarp or into a large bin and shuffle-dance on top of them. If dry, you can do this in the field at the time of harvest. Pick out the large vines and pour the rest from a bucket into the stream of a controlled fan to winnow out the chaff.

PROCESSING

SEED SAVING & STORAGE

Peas are inbreeding, self-pollinating plants with flowers typically pollinated before the blossoms open. Crossing is rare but may occur. Separate varieties by 50' to be certain. Simply save the seed from the best plants. Peas can have problems with weevils. Check your seed carefully. Weevils may be controlled by freezing peas in an airtight container prior to storage. As with all seed, be sure peas are thoroughly dry before storing.

COOKING TIPS

Dry peas typically take 60-90 minutes simmering to soften. Split peas cook quicker but whole peas can be cooked as well. Known best for their role in homemade soup, peas are also good in many recipes used with lentils, garbanzos, favas, or other beans, and add a rich, creamy gravy and smoky flavor to winter dishes.

YIELDS & LABOR

We yielded 36 cups (18 lbs) per 100 row feet of pole peas and 15 cups (7.5 lbs) per 100 square feet of bush peas. In our small trials, 1.5 total hours labor produced 3 lbs (6.5 cups) soup peas.

BBGP RESEARCH

VARIETIES

We have trialled three varieties, all successful: Darlaine bush pea, Australian 6' pole pea, and Capucinea 3' pole.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

