

## GARDEN INOCULANT

Peas grow best and thrive when planted with garden inoculant. What is it exactly, and why use it? Garden inoculant has a nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria called Rhizobium. Rhizobia need a plant host to fix nitrogen. To do this, it attaches to the nodules of legumes. The bacteria and peas have a symbiotic relationship. The bacteria is able to gather nitrogen from the air and feed it to the legume which then converts it into nitrogen that can be released into the soil. This benefits the growth of your peas (and other legumes) in addition to adding nitrogen to the soil that could benefit other crops after the peas have been harvested!

If there have already been legumes grown there, the bacteria can usually exist in the soil. That being said, it is still beneficial to add to your soil. If you haven't grown legume crops in your garden yet, it's crucial for setting them up for success.

## PLANTING & HARVEST

Make sure to plant your pea seeds near your trellising system. An easy way to plant is to make a 1" deep furrow where you want them to grow. Give about 3" space between each furrow. Don't worry about spacing the seeds far apart from each other in the individual furrows, as peas like to grow densely together.

You can sprinkle inoculant into the planting row before placing the pea seeds, or after placing them. Alternatively, if you are soaking your peas, (soaking can help aid germination) you can place some inoculant in a container, toss your soaked pea seeds into the inoculant, and coat them entirely before planting. Cover the seeds with soil and water them in well.

After your pea starts come up, there is no need to thin them like other seedlings. Water when needed and keep an eye out for hungry pests. Harvest peas frequently as they ripen to keep the plants producing. Don't let the pods over-ripen, as pea pods will become tough and the peas will become starchy and lose their tender sweetness.

**Down To Earth Distributors**  
*Home Grown since 1977*  
Eugene, Oregon

# PLANTING PEAS



*This early spring-planted crop prefers to be directly sowed into the ground, rather than started indoors and transplanted. There are several different types of peas you can grow in the garden to eat: all delicious with different culinary uses.*

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEAS

**Snap:** These plump, juicy pods are filled with peas and can be eaten in their entirety. They are usually very sweet and flavorful. They can be cooked, but are delicious right off the plant or tossed into salads.

**Snow:** Snow peas are stringless flat pods with tiny peas inside. The entire pod is edible. They are delicious raw or cooked, and excellent in stir fry.

**Shelling/Garden:** These peas feature a tough outer pod which isn't for eating, but the delicious plump sweet peas inside are excellent right out of the pod or cooked in your next meal. Great for preserving.

## PREPARING TO PLANT

Peas want access to full sun, and need good, well-draining soil. Peas thrive in cooler weather, making early spring and late fall the perfect time for planting. They like to be densely planted and not thinned after seeding.

If your soil is more compact, you can break it up and add some compost or other organic matter prior to planting to promote better drainage. You can add a little phosphorus to your soil before planting- we recommend a natural fertilizer like **Down To Earth's Fish Bone Meal 4-12-0** for good results. You could also use **Bone Meal 3-15-0**, or **Rose & Flower 4-8-4**. You don't need to worry too much about a nitrogen source, as peas will fix their own nitrogen when you add garden inoculant at planting time.

You will also want to set up a support/trellising system beforehand for them to grow on. They are a vining plant and will need support as they grow and start fruiting. If you already have some on hand, tomato cages can work well for this, a fencing structure already in place, or construct something using garden twine. Really, you just want anything that will support their vertical growth.

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