

GROWING ACTIVITY 3

GROWING PEA SHOOTS



Pea shoots are delicious raw or cooked and easy to grow indoors all year round in just a few days, or outdoors in the spring and summer. They are delicious in all kinds of dishes, from salads and sandwiches to frittata and pasta. For older participants, growing pea shoots can provide a hands-on, sensory activity and is a great opportunity to reminisce and generate discussion. For younger participants, this growing activity is a great way to link the food we eat back to its roots – where and how it is grown.

PREPARATION

1. Empty the peas into a container of water to soak overnight – this is really important to ensure they germinate quickly.
2. Get everyone involved right from the very start! Divide up the shopping and preparation tasks between the older and younger generations.
3. Prepare the activity area and put cloths on the tables.
 - a. make sure there's plenty of space for everyone to sit at the table, in chairs or wheelchairs, and the surface is at the right height.
 - b. keep a dustpan and brush handy to clean up any spilt compost. set out equipment and materials according to group size and who can do what.
 - d. prepare for hand washing/cleansing with a wipe/using gloves as suited to the participants.
 - e. gather resources to help provoke conversation and stimulate memory. Tools from the past, recipe books and pictures of pea-shoot used in dishes can help the older participants to reminisce and share their knowledge and recipes with younger participants. They may have their own story of growing peas or pea shoots when they were younger!

Empty the peas into a container of water to soak overnight

Garden Organic has useful growing cards which can be downloaded and used to start your own resource collection. Resources for growing peas and mange tout outdoors can be downloaded here. You could also try different sprouting seeds, which can be downloaded from their website too.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- Gloves
- Scoops/trowels
- Dustpan and brush
- Re-useable cloths for tables
- Container for growing pea shoots 6–9cm deep – you can reuse mushroom/grape/tomato trays from the supermarket or pots you already have, just make sure you put holes in the bottom
- Bowl or jug for soaking the peas
- Dried peas sold for cooking – these are cheaper than buying seed packets – Peat free compost
- Water



SESSION PLAN

1. Make everyone comfortable at the table, wearing gloves and plasters if any cuts.
2. Introduce the activity – clearly explaining what is being planted, talk about peas and link to relevant cooking and farming activities participants may have done before.
3. Select your containers and fill with compost to about 2cm below the top and then water.
4. Add your peas in quite close together, leaving a gap about a pea's width between seeds. You are growing shoots not large plants so you don't need much spaces.
5. Cover with compost, about the thickness of a pea, and press compost gently until firm, then water the surface.
6. Leave on a windowsill with plenty of light and water as necessary keeping the compost moist. It takes about a week to get your pea shoots coming through and then 2-3 weeks to get a decent height for harvesting.
7. Don't leave your pea shoot plants too long before cutting, otherwise the stems can taste bitter as they start to thicken. Pinch off each shoot just above the bottom leaves. They will regrow and give you a second harvest.
8. When they are finished you can compost the roots.
9. Clear the tables and put everything away. Put the herb containers outside – Check them daily for watering and growth. Enlist members of the community to help with this.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

FOR THOSE WHO CAN PARTICIPATE WELL

There are lots of hands-on opportunities for those who can get involved. Perhaps pair more abled participants up with a less able resident or ask them to help distributing equipment and materials. They can decant compost into smaller manageable quantities or containers. They can also keep an eye out for anyone struggling to bend and lift and watch out for any signs of dizziness and balance issues.

FOR THOSE WITH SOME LIMITS TO PARTICIPATION

Offer more step-by-step support. 'Raise' the ground by using tables to put the containers/bags on. Provide chairs or stools for the participants to use if they need to. Use plastic potting trays with sides to empty the compost into prior to sowing the peas, so it is easier to scoop or use hands.

FOR THOSE WITH SEVERE LIMITS TO PARTICIPATION

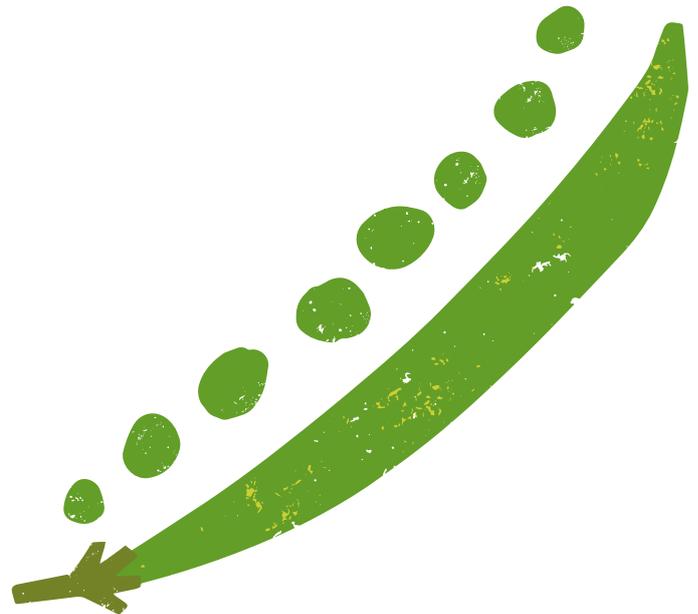
Have pictures of the activity and ensure verbal instructions are clear. Recommendations as above but use hands to scoop compost if it is difficult to hold a scoop. Have a bag of dried seeds they can feel and some grown pea shoots to smell and taste.

GENERATE CONVERSATION, REMINISCE AND EXPLORE SENSORY EXPERIENCES

- Where are peas grown?
- Talk about how you like to eat peas – mushy, mangetout, with rice, etc.
- Questions you could ask everyone:
 - Have you ever picked peas before?
 - What's your favourite dish including peas?
 - Have you ever podded peas? Older participants may have memories of podding peas at the table, or they may remember that the peas tasted so good that they didn't even make it back from the garden!
- Questions you could ask older participants:
 - Did you get involved with growing or working on a farm during WWII e.g. land girls, or as evacuees?
 - Do you remember when frozen peas first appeared in shops?

MAKE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS'

- Take photos of your growing activity together and make how-to guides for family members. Schools and care homes may like to display and share these more widely! Try a selection of different peas – mange tout, purple peas, sugar snap peas. How are they different (look, touch, taste, feel)? Which are your favourite?
- Cook up some recipes with peas and pea shoots from salads and soups to stir fries and curries
- Participants with a farming background may like to share their childhood or working stories with other participants in order to reminisce and share their experiences of food, farming and WWII.



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