

GARDEN NEWS

It's raining, it's pouring....it's sunny, it's snowy.... The calendar says spring is here, and we've got the wild weather to prove it. Luckily, some plants don't mind the erratic cycles of warm sun and cold precipitation (just watch those weeds and grass seem to double in height every day!). It's the perfect weather to get a start on both your ornamental and vegetable beds by transplanting sweet and edible peas.



SWEET PEAS

Our incredible selection of sweet pea starts – including Spencer, Old-Fashioned, Cuthbertson, Dwarf, Flake, and Winter Elegance varieties – are growing lush and sturdy in both jumbos and 4 inch pots. We're fortunate to sow our starts using seed from [Fragrant Garden Nursery](#), a small family business on the Oregon coast that specializes in heirloom and modern sweet pea varieties. If you'd like to sow direct instead of getting a jump with our starts, we recommend trying their seed! You can also visit their website for color photos of all our varieties (or see our [Sweet Pea Brochure](#)).

Sweet peas like areas with cool summers, where they will bloom from late spring until October. You can still grow sweet peas in hotter climates, though; they just won't bloom as long. Setting out transplants around April 1st is one way to give them a head start on the hot weather. Also, protect the plants from drying winds and keep their roots cool and moist (drip irrigation and mulch are good) to prolong their flowering.

To transplant, select a sunny, well-drained site, then gently remove the plants from their trays, set them 6 to 8 inches apart in a 4 inch trench, cover the roots with soil, and water well. If you're not growing them along a fence or trellis, provide some kind of support when you plant (try bamboo canes or chicken wire) so the growing vines will have something to grab onto. See Fragrant Garden's site for additional information on starting and growing sweet peas.

EDIBLE PEAS

Edible peas also like cooler weather and even start to decline as the days heat up. If you haven't direct-sown an early crop yet, now is a good time to put in some starts. Transplant and grow them like sweet peas, in sun and well-drained soil, but place them more closely, about 2 to 3 inches apart. Taller, vining varieties should be given a trellis or fence, but we also have many shorter, sturdy bush-types that need no support. One of our new favorites this year is 'Golden Sweet Edible,' with – you guessed it – bright golden yellow pods!

Altogether, we are growing about 20 different varieties of edible peas as 4 inch starts (5 plants per pot) this year, including shelling, snow, snap, petit pois, container dwarf, and tendril shelling types. We recommend planting several varieties to ensure an extended and varied harvest. For some delicious suggestions on preparing fresh sugar snap peas, check out this month's edition of [Sunset magazine](#).

PERENNIALS

Many perennials can also be planted in early spring. The new coreopsis 'Sunshine' series, with its feathery lime-green foliage to brighten rainy spring days, is our highlighted variety this week. In summer, the dense chartreuse mounds produce abundant large daisy blooms in 'Pink,' 'Cherry,' and 'Scarlet.'



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