



Garden Tips and Techniques: Trellising Peas

The weather this year has made early spring planting difficult! If you haven't already planted your peas outdoors, keep an eye on the weather and the soil conditions. As soon as the soil is dry enough - it should crumble instead of forming clods when you try to work with it - it's time to plant! You'll want to plant them within the next week or two, so they have time to grow and produce while the weather is still somewhat cool.

Because peas are a cool season crop, consistently hot temperatures (usually toward the end of June) stress the plants and reduce yield. Check the *days to maturity* – the number of days listed on the seed packet or in the catalog, to determine the average number of days it takes from planting your variety of peas until your first harvest.

Once your peas are in the ground, it's time to decide whether to set up a trellising system. Check your seed variety to see how tall the plants will grow. Some pea varieties grow to an average of 2-3', while others can reach 6' tall or more!

Shorter pea varieties can benefit from some type of support, as the plants tend to intertwine and flop over onto the ground. Helping them to grow upright can keep the pea pods clean, allow light to reach more of the plant, and make harvesting a little easier. [Sticks, crisscrossed and stuck into the ground](#), can create a simple, free and interesting trellis. Short pea varieties can also be grown without trellising.

Taller, vining peas need support in order to grow and produce well. There are lots of methods for trellising tall peas. Bamboo, wood, or metal stakes, placed a few feet apart can provide a sturdy structure for twine, wrapped between the poles. We've found that placing the outermost posts in the row so they angle away from the row, helps to keep the trellis from sagging. Commercial products like [plastic netting](#), [biodegradable netting](#), [willow trellises](#), and [metal trellises](#) are also available.

See the photo below of our Shiloh Farm pea trellises. Feel free to stop by this production site, at the corner of Hamilton Ave. and Thomas Blvd. in Point Breeze, to take a closer look!

Please see photo on the following page.

