

Perfume in the pea patch


Sweet peas are an old-time favorite. Nothing matches them for both fragrance and beauty in the garden. Our cool climate in North Dakota is perfect for sweet peas. Here are a few tips to add some perfume in your pea patch:

Plant early. Sow the seeds in early spring (early April) about one month before your last frost. Pick a well-drained spot that stays out of the hot afternoon sun.

Nick the seed. Germination will improve if you use a nail clipper to gently nick a piece of the brown seed coat from each seed. This will help the seed to absorb water from the soil quickly, thereby increasing your germination percentage and speed. If this clipping is too much work, pre-soak the seeds for 24 hours before sowing. Sow the seeds about 2 inches apart in the row and later thin to 6 inches apart.

Manage them. Pinch back the seedlings when they are 8 inches tall to encourage branching (and more flowers). Make the pinch just above a pair of leaves. Tall

varieties should be trellised. Deadheading will be important to extend the blooming time.

Enjoy them. Harvest a stem when half of its flowers have opened. Place the cut flowers in water as soon as possible. 



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