



Grow instructions

Grow instructions for Norli snow peas of the Proefje Tuin project

Great that you are participating in the Proefje Tuin project! With your help, we can get one step closer in understanding the complicated interplay between soil life and plant quality.

Even though you might have a lot of experience already with growing legumes, we do ask you to read these instructions carefully. Not because we think we know better, but because we have specific guidelines to standardize the growth of the snow peas as much as possible. For example, we want you to sow the seeds directly in your garden to avoid potential effects of the soil in the pre-sowing tray.

Sowing

Sow the snow peas between the last week of March and the first week of April, when the temperature is around 15 degrees Celsius. Write the date of sowing in the logbook. Sow the seeds directly in full soil at around 1 cm deep, with 10 cm between the seeds. Don't sow them under glass. You are allowed to protect the seeds and seedlings against herbivory with mesh or canvas.

We provide you with 30 seeds but for this experiment we are aiming for 15 plants. Depending on the size of your garden, you can choose to sow less seeds. If you want to sow multiple rows, aim for a distance of 40 cm between the rows.

Watering

Snow peas don't need a lot of water but also don't like drought. If conditions are very dry, water regularly.

Providing nutrients

For this project, we specifically ask you to not provide any additional nutrients to the plants. If the plants show signs of nutrient deficiency, write down in the logbook what you've added on what day and in what quantity.

Have you added something to the soil before sowing? Then also write down in the logbook on which day you've added how much of which addition. Try to be as precise as possible with the description of the addition. The amount can be an estimate. For example:

April 2nd – compost of own garden – approx. 500 grams

Or for example:

28th of March – solid manure of horses from a stables close to the garden – approx. 1 kilo

Support

The snow peas we have chosen belongs to the dwarf pea types and needs no to little support. However, picking the snow pea pods can be easier when the plants are supported. This can be done with sticks or a fence. Choose a method that suits you well, or for which you have the right materials.

Root nodule measurement

All legumes, including our snow peas, form root nodules in the right conditions. This is a type of organ made by the plant as a kind of house for nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Therefore, the abundance of root nodules on the roots of a plant is an indication of how many nitrogen-fixing bacteria are present in the soil, and how well they are collaborating with the plant.

The root nodule form in the logbook will provide more information on how to do this root nodule measurement. Do this measurement when the plants start to flower, which is usually around 6-8 weeks after sowing. Write down the date when you do this measurement on the first page of the logbook.

Harvest

Until the 10th of June, you are allowed to harvest the ripe snow pea pods. When you harvest, you stimulate the growth of new flowers and thereby new pods, and the younger pods are usually the tastiest. Don't wait too long to harvest, as the pods can get stringy and mealy. Between the 15th and 26th of June, we will come by to sample the plants of your garden so around that time, please leave at least 20 good snow pea pods in total to make sure we won't leave empty handed. If you are joining the Harvest Festival on the 4th of July, please bring 10 good snow pea pods in the provided ziplock bag.

What to do if:

- All seeds/seedlings have been eaten
 - If this happens quickly after sowing, please contact us at proefjetuin@biology.leidenuniv.nl, then we might be able to provide you with new seeds.
- All or part of the plants show symptoms of deficiencies or disease
 - Do you recognise symptoms of deficiencies or disease, like discolouration in the leaves or a halted growth? If you know from experience how to deal with that situation, you are allowed to take action although we strongly recommend to not use chemical pesticides. In such a case, if you use something, write it down in the logbook and try to be as precise as possible when describing the name and quantity of the product you used. If you have any doubts, contact us at proefjetuin@biology.leidenuniv.nl.
- All plants have died
 - Contact us at proefjetuin@biology.leidenuniv.nl.

For further questions, you can always reach out via proefjetuin@biology.leidenuniv.nl.