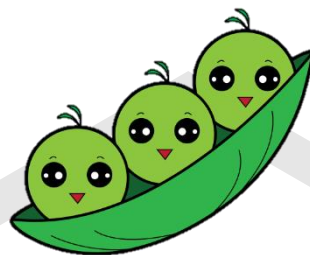


Plant of the Month

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\\NAS\Station 15\Plant of the Month\



Pisum sativum/ *Lathyrus oleraceus*

Pea



History/Traditional Use

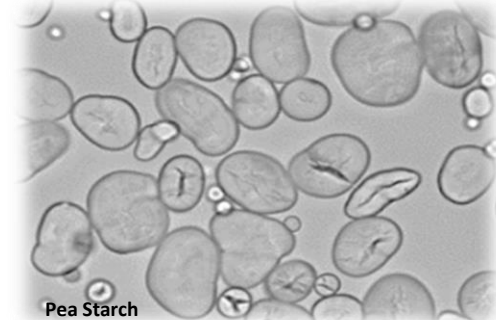
Archaeological evidence found in the Fertile Crescent (the area surrounding modern day Israel and Jordan and the land in and around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers), indicates that people have been cultivating pea since 8,000 BC. Western Asia appears to be the area in which pea was first cultivated and from there it was spread by humans to Europe, China and India. Remains have been recovered from some of the oldest known village sites. Peas are now a major crop throughout the cool temperate zone, especially in northern Europe and Russia.



Pharmacology

Peas are a nutritious legume, containing 15 to 35% protein, and high concentrations of the essential amino acids lysine and tryptophan.

Uses: livestock feed, human consumption, forage crop, rotational crop and cover crops



Pea Starch

Chemistry

Pea starch consists predominantly of C-type of amylopectin chain which is more resistant to digestive enzymes than A-type of starch thus slowly digested in poultry. Pea starch is slowly digested, as a consequence it often has a lower digestibility than starch from cereal grain. These properties of pea starch have been shown to improve broiler feed efficiency.

Fun Facts

- The seeds are thought to cause dysentery when eaten raw in quantity.
- Oil from ripened seeds has an antisex hormonal effect which can produce sterility.

Botany/Preparation

As with many cultivated species, there is a wide range of variation in *P. sativum* and a complex nomenclatural history. Two major kinds of peas are cultivated. The garden pea: mainly grown for human consumption of the seeds; tends to have relatively large pods and seeds, as well as white corollas and is sometimes designated as var. *sativum*

The field pea: grown mainly for livestock and soil improvement, it has somewhat smaller pods and seeds, usually pink or purple, often bicolorous flowers, and is sometimes classified as var. *arvense*.



Pl. 88. Pois cultivé. Pisum sativum L.

References

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