

What type of soil is best for growing sweet peas?

When growing sweet peas, there are several different soil types to help you get the most from these sweet scented blossoms. Depending on where you are will effect the soil and in turn, how well your sweet peas grow. But the good news is, with a little bit of know-how, you too can create a sweet pea collection worthy of the Chelsea Flower Show. Soon, you can have a garden full of these dainty, colourful flowers perfectly accustomed to the British climate!

Where to start – it's all about the soil.

As with most things, the best place to start is the beginning. With different soil types providing different nutrients, it's important to think firstly about what sweet peas need to thrive and adjust accordingly. Favouring a nutrient rich soil with neutral to slightly alkaline levels, sweet peas are best suited to somewhere soil between 7-7.5 PH. Whilst soil needs to be moist it is important to make sure the ground is not overly damp as this will impair the success of these robust blooms. Nutrient rich soil is also essential in ensuring the sweet peas are provided with a hearty source of food.

Crafting the best sweet pea soil.

Many will find their soil supply not quite up to scratch for the specific needs of sweet peas, but the good news is with a little preparation, soil can be adapted to suit needs. Soil tests are readily available and can provide a good indication of the PH levels. An acidic soil is remedied with the addition of lime whilst overly alkaline soils can be brought to more neutral ground with sulphur additives. Soil tests should give an indication of how much of each is needed to bring soil levels up to optimum. If the problem is more about consistency of soil such as clay or sand based, the inclusion of quantities of organic matter will improve the ground hugely. Cured manure, home-made compost, even seaweed can massively improve the quality of soil if worked into the ground, ideally combined to a depth of just over a foot.

Keeping sweet pea happy.

In preparing soil for imminent sweet pea seed arrival, it is worth adding some fertilizer. Low-nitrogen fertilizers that are high in phosphorus instead will help encourage growth and nutrient ratios of 20-20-20 come highly recommended, however organic fertilizers are also a helpful option particularly blood, bone and manure. As sweet peas continue to grow, it is worth topping up fertilizer every couple of weeks to give a food boost.

Where is the best spot?

So long as they are planted in locations that are either partially or fully sunlit, sweet peas will thrive. Perfect for both flower beds, containers and vegetable patches alike, they mostly grow in vine form meaning they will need support, although some varieties do grow in bushes. Once well prepared for, sweet peas are relatively hardy and beautiful additions to any garden. Just remember to check the soil first!