

FARMER IN THE FIELD



The Three Peas, English, Snow and Sugar Snap

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By now most of the farmers markets that had taken a hiatus over the winter are back in full swing. You'll find sweet cherries and other yummy fruits but these aren't the only sweet treats you'll find at the markets. Pop open an English pea and learn the true meaning of nature's candy. Those perfect little balls of sweetness just waiting to be eaten.

Remember a pound of English peas only yields about a cup of peas so buy plenty. Shelling peas is fun so make it a family activity and get the kids involved. If shelling peas isn't your idea of fun then visit a Swank Farms stall and buy your peas already shelled.

The snow pea has a flat pod which contains five to seven small seeds, is between two to three inches long and has a completely edible pod. Our third pea was born in 1970 when a plant scientist, Calvin Lamborn discovered a cross between the English pea and the snow pea that would eventually be known as the sugar snap pea. Also wrapped in an edible pod, these peas are small, plump and the sweetest of them all.

Peas are loaded with lots of good stuff that can contribute to a healthy body. From joint health to heart health it's all good, so go green this month and eat your peas!

Pea Facts

English peas: Ideally the peas inside each pod are medium sized; too small and flavor may not be fully developed and too large and they may be dry or starchy.

Snow peas: Purchase smooth, thin, crisp pods with little or no seed enlargement. Fresh pods are turgid and shiny, not wilted.

Sugar snap peas: Pods are at best when crisp, tender and plump but with little or no string along the suture (top of pod leading to the little point). Wilted or tough pods will not be sweet and crisp inside.

Storage – Snow or sugar snap peas can be stored for up to two weeks in a refrigerator at 40 degrees. F. Wash, drain and place pods in plastic bags before refrigerating them.

Microwave Instructions - Cut ends. Place pods in 9" pie plate with two tablespoons water. Cover with plastic wrap. Cook 1/4 lb. for two to four minutes on high.

Did you know that pea leaves are delicious when picked young and tender. Many chefs serve them as a fresh vegetable.