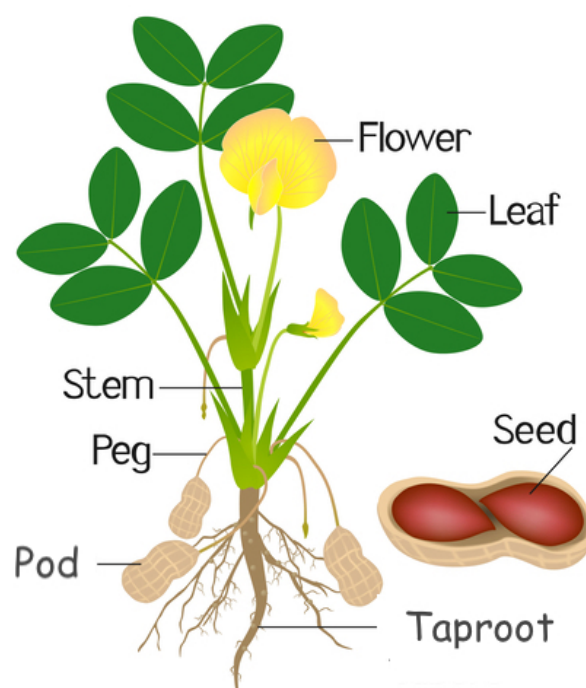


Peanut Growing Guide:

Adapted from [Garden sPOTS' Peanut Harvest Science Kit](#) that includes this guide, experiments, activities, seeds, planter, soil and compost.

Materials you Need to Grow Peanuts in a Planter

- A 16 to 20-inch diameter planter
- Potting mix & compost combination: 3 parts potting mix to 1 part compost. Do not use potting mix with added fertilizer.
- 3 Raw (not cooked) Tennessee Red Valencia peanut seeds with red seed coat intact



Parts of the Peanut Plant

Planting Peanuts

Steps:

1. Start with the calendar: Peanuts need a long, hot growing season so you want to make sure you start your plants a couple of weeks after the last frost date (the last frost is around May 15 in our area) and when the soil temperature is 65-70 degrees. This will be about June 1.
2. Mark your planting date on your calendar.
 - a. Count another 10 days and write, "sprout week." This is the week when you should see your seeds starting to sprout out of the soil.



- b. Count 30 more days (40 days after planting) and write, “flower week.” This is when you should see the first flowers appear.
 - c. Count another 60 days (110 days after planting) and write “possible harvest week.” We’ll talk about how to know when your peanuts are ready below.
3. Get your planter ready.
 - a. **FIRST:** If your planter has a saucer, remove it. Peanuts like well-drained soil and you don’t want the planter to sit in any water.
 - b. **Second:** Pour half of your potting mix / compost combination into your planter. Add water to dampen the potting mix then add the remaining potting mix to the planter.
 - c. **Finally:** Pat your soil gently – it should be about 1 – 2 inches from the top of the planter. If you have extra, save it for other projects.
4. In the center of the pot, make a hole for each of the peanut seeds. The hole should be about 1 inch deep.
5. Put one peanut seed in each hole and push soil over the seed. Pat gently.
6. Put your peanut planter where it will get at least 6 hours of direct sun every day. The more sun, the better.
7. Water your seeds. Water the pot SLOWLY to avoid pushing the soil around too much. Water until all the soil looks wet and some water runs out of the bottom of the pot. You will need at least a couple of gallons of water to wet all the new potting mix.
8. When the seedlings are 2” tall, find the strongest looking plant and remove the other two. The extra seeds ensure that you have a good crop, but your pot is the right size for 1 peanut plant. Removing the extra plants is called, “**thinning**.” Snip off the plants you are removing at the soil level. Don’t pull them out – you may affect the plant you are keeping.
9. Read “Things to Know” carefully.

Things To Know:

- **Water:** *Check your planter every day.* Make sure the tiny sprouts and young plants have moist (not wet) soil. When the plants are 5 inches tall, they’ll be stronger, and you can follow this method:
 - Put your finger in the soil every morning, when the top half inch is dry, it’s time to give your peanuts a good drink of water.
 - Water the soil and *not the leaves* to avoid attracting fungus.
 - Try to water in the morning or mid-day so the leaves and stems dry before night falls. Damp conditions attract fungus.
- **Food:** Peanuts don’t need as much food as other plants. They should get all the nutrition they need from the compost that was blended into the potting mix. In fact, peanuts help other plants grow by bringing nitrogen into the soil!
- **Pegs need soil:** Peanut plants produce a long shoot called a “peg”. These are the stems the peanuts grow on – but they grow underground. If a peg cannot reach the soil, it will



not be able to grow a peanut. If you see a peg hanging over the side of the planter, gently move the stem so it is directly over the soil.

Harvesting your peanuts

You will need:

- Garden trowel, old spoon, or something else to loosen soil
- About 2 feet of string
- A dry place to hang your peanut plant

Steps:

When to harvest:

The Tennessee Red Valencia peanut needs about 110 days to grow peanuts that are ready to eat. When the peanut pods are ready for harvesting, the entire plant will turn yellow and start to die. If you harvest too soon, you may get empty shells or puny peanuts.

How to harvest:

Harvest all your peanuts at the same time. Use a garden trowel, an old spoon or other tool to carefully loosen the soil. Push the trowel between the soil and the pot wall and then wiggle it a bit. This will loosen the soil but try not to cut off the peanuts. Pull the plant out of the planter. The peanuts will still be attached to their pegs and will hang from the bottom of the plant. Don't take them off. They need to dry first.

Drying peanuts

According to the National Peanut Board, peanuts contain 25-50% moisture when they are first harvested (<https://www.nationalpeanutboard.org/peanut-info/how-peanuts-grow.htm>). The newly harvested peanuts are called, "green peanuts." Curing them (drying them) reduces the moisture, which preserves them and gets them ready for roasting.

To dry your peanuts, brush off the excess soil and use your string to tie the plant into a bunch. Hang the whole plant in a warm, dry place like a garage or basement. Hang the plant so that the peanuts point up toward the ceiling and the leaves hang down.

Let the bundle dry for a week then remove the pods from the plants. Brush off the remaining soil and spread them out in a dry space to cure for another 2 weeks. Your peanuts are now ready for roasting!





Photo courtesy of [John Macdonald](#)

TIP: If you want to grow peanuts again, save a few pods in a dry place. They will become next year's peanut seeds.

How to Roast

Take the peanuts out of their pods and put them in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Sprinkle them with a little salt and bake them at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Stir them once or twice while they are roasting. Wait about 10 minutes for the peanuts to cool before you sample them. They will get crunchier as they cool down.

If you want to roast the peanuts in their shells, be sure to rinse the shells in cool, running water first, then pat them dry. Put them on a baking sheet and roast them at 350 degrees for 20 -25 minutes. For a good recipe, video, and tips, see this article from The Spruce Eats <https://www.thespruceeats.com/oven-roasted-peanuts-4172872>

