

Mice and Peas!



- Ideas to mouse-proof your planting and give your peas an early start

Peas seem to be the favourite of mice, and to add insult to injury, they like to eat the sprouting pea and the base of the shoot, leaving the root and leaves to taunt the frustrated allotment gardener. At Windmill, our mice have shown that they can climb all kinds of obstacles to get to our early peas, so we have tried a few ways to out-wit them.

Here are some methods for growing early peas that you might like to try yourself, and some of the ways we “mouseproofed” them.

Eggbox technique

This makes use of the fact that egg boxes will gradually soften and fall apart when they have been damp for long enough. In this case, that’s about the right amount of time to allow the peas to be planted in the ground outside or in, so this is a handy technique.



Step 1- cut a flap out of the top of the egg box and cover with foil. This will help to reflect light onto the peas so they don’t lean towards the light, useful if you are growing on a window sill



Step 2 - Put a pea in the top of each egg section, then press in lightly



Step 3 - Now cover with a more compost so the peas are about 1cm below the surface.



Step 4 - Make sure you label the seeds!



Step 5- Place in hanging basket so mice can't get the peas. Angle so that the foil faces south to maximise light when peas sprout.

Step 6 - Water well and keep moist but not wet.

Step 7 - When peas sprout and it's time to plant them out, you can take off the foil and just plant the whole egg-box as it is, or you can break up the box into compartments and spread them out a little more. Roots will grow through the cardboard.

Another "mouse proof" idea is to string up a plant-pot holder and plant into this. We like to use cardboard toilet roll tubes which are then planted straight into the ground. Again be sure to label peas.



If planting straight into the ground, try cutting fresh nettles and mulching the ground with them as soon as the peas are sown. We found this stops the germinating peas being attacked, keeps them moist and at the leaves dry, it's easy for the peas to sprout through it.