

Peanuts

Arachis hypogaea · Legume family

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Annual, warm-season, direct sown
MATURITY 18–26 weeks



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Regular,
especially during
flowering and
pod set



SOIL PH
5.8–7.0



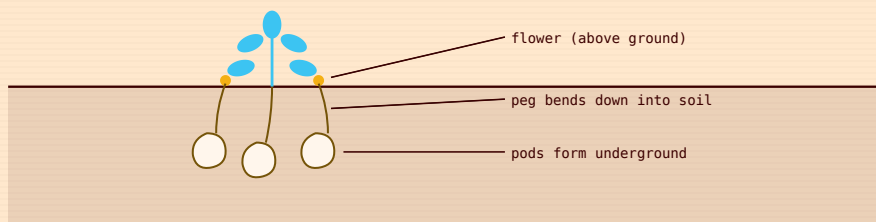
SPACING
10–15cm apart,
rows 50cm apart



DEPTH
4–5cm

01 Pegs and pods

After flowering, the flower stalks (pegs) bend down and push into the soil, where the pods form underground. That is why light, loose soil matters more than almost anything else.



02 Planting

METHOD	Sow raw, unroasted peanuts, shelled just before sowing so the skins stay intact, 4–5cm deep.
SOIL	Light, sandy, loose and well-drained. Heavy clay stops the pegs from penetrating the soil.
TIMING	Sow in spring once soil is above 18°C (September–November in the subtropics, October–November further south). Needs around 5 frost-free months.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

04 Problems

- **Leaf spot** — brown spots with yellow halos on leaves; space for airflow, rotate crops and avoid overhead watering.
- **Root-knot nematodes** — knobbly galls on roots, common in sandy soil; rotate and add plenty of organic matter.
- **Seed thieves** — cockatoos, rats and possums dig up sown seed; net the bed until seedlings are up.
- **Mould and aflatoxin** — poorly dried or damaged nuts can grow a mould that makes aflatoxin; dry quickly and discard any mouldy, shrivelled or discoloured nuts.

03 Growing care

- Water regularly through flowering and pod set, then reduce as the crop matures.
- Hill loose soil around the base when flowering begins so the pegs reach soil easily.
- Add gypsum or lime at flowering if soil is low in calcium — a shortage causes empty pods.
- Mulch lightly and weed by hand; deep hoeing damages the pegs.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Leaves yellow and the lower ones drop; dig one plant — the inside of the shell is veined and the kernel fills the pod, about 4–6 months after sowing.
METHOD	Loosen the soil with a fork and lift whole plants gently, shaking off soil but leaving the pods attached.
CURING	Hang the plants, or stack them pods-up, in a warm airy shed for 2–3 weeks until the pods rattle, then pick them off.
STORAGE	In-shell, cool, dry and ventilated, 6–12 months. Shelled raw peanuts keep a few months in the fridge, longer frozen.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating (drying nuts fully before storage) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY

Corn

Pumpkin

AVOID NEARBY

Onion

Garlic

ROTATION NOTE

A legume that fixes nitrogen. Rotate on a 3-year cycle to avoid soil disease build-up, and follow with leafy or heavy-feeding crops.