

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing cowpea

Cowpea, also known as Southern Peas and Black-eyed Peas, are a very heat-tolerant legume which makes them a good choice for a home garden. Cowpea grows in bush, vine, tall and short varieties. The leaves of the cowpea plant are edible when they're young, but most gardeners grow them for the pea. Cowpeas are often eaten on New Year's Day to bring good luck throughout the year.

To plant:

Plant cowpea seeds outdoors once the last frost date has passed. Sow them directly into the garden. Plant seeds 2 inches deep and 3 inches apart in rows set 3 feet apart. Plant the seeds with the eye of the seed facing down. Do not plant cowpea seeds in the same spot in the garden more than once every four years. Cowpeas grow well near corn, strawberries and cucumbers, but do not plant them near fennel or onions.

To grow:

Cowpeas grow best in full sun in rich, well-drained soil. Although cowpeas are heat tolerant, water frequently. When you water, try to keep from getting water on the plant's leaves. Cowpeas take 80 days or more to become ready for harvest. If growing on a vine, they will need some support like a pole or fence during their growth.

To harvest:

Cowpea pods can get up to 6 to 10 inches in length and look similar to green beans. Pods can be harvested when they're young, as well as when they've dried. If harvesting while green, pick the pods when they are very young. To harvest dry cowpea pods, pick after the pods have dried on the vine.



[California Blackeye 46 Cowpea seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

What cowpea craves:

Cowpeas grow quicker if fertilizer is applied immediately after planting. Once the plants are established, they generally do not require frequent fertilization. However, if the plant's green leaves become pale, this means they are experiencing a nitrogen deficiency. They can then be fertilized with fish emulsion or nitrogen-rich fertilizers.

Where to buy cowpea seeds:

Urban Farmer sells many different kind of cowpea seeds. Check out our website at [ufseeds.com!](http://ufseeds.com)



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