

## Teaching Points      Grades 5-6

### Peas



#### Reasons to Eat Peas

- ❖ One half cup of cooked peas are an excellent source of vitamin A and vitamin K.
- ❖ A good source of vitamin C, thiamin and folate (B vitamins).
- ❖ Peas have protein. Proteins are essential parts of all living organisms and participate in every process within cells, e.g. proteins are enzymes, have structural or mechanical functions, they are important in cell signaling, immune responses, and the cell cycle.
- ❖ Vitamin K helps transport calcium throughout the body. Calcium is needed to make our bones grow strong. Vitamin K also helps our cuts stop bleeding. This is called clotting.
- ❖ Peas are a good source of fiber and iron. Fiber helps move food through our bodies. Fiber can also help lower blood cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of getting heart disease. Iron helps transport oxygen throughout our body and regulates cell growth.

#### What's in a Name?

- ❖ In Spanish, peas are chícharos.
- ❖ Peas are a member of the legume family.
- ❖ A legume is a plant that has a pod or shell with plump seeds inside.
- ❖ Some examples of legumes we eat are green beans, split peas, green peas, black-eyed peas and pinto beans.
- ❖ There are two main kinds of peas: green and edible-pod. Green peas have inedible pods and sweet, full-sized seeds. Most edible-pod peas have seeds that are not yet fully developed. (inedible = not eaten)
- ❖ Varieties of green peas are English peas and garden peas.
- ❖ Varieties of edible-pod peas are snow peas, and sugar snap peas.

#### Eat Your Colors

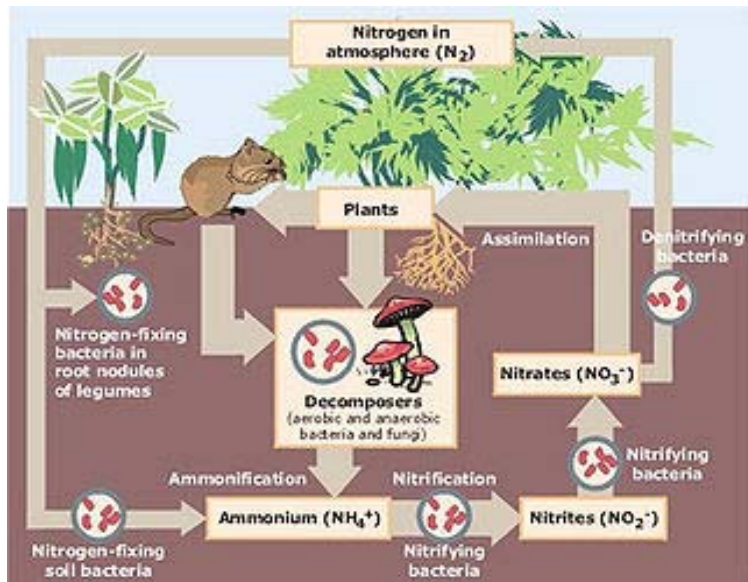
- ❖ Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day such as red, yellow/orange, white, green and blue/purple.
- ❖ These may lower the risk of getting some cancers.
- ❖ Peas are in the green color group.
- ❖ Green fruits and vegetables help keep your eyes healthy and help keep your bones and teeth strong.

#### Just the Facts

- ❖ The sugar snap pea is actually a hybrid of green and snow peas. It was developed in 1979 to make an edible-pod variety with sweeter, full-sized peas.
- ❖ Edible-pod peas were specifically developed so that the pods' fibers go in one direction, allowing them to be chewed.
- ❖ Thomas Jefferson, our third president, loved green peas. They were one of his favorite. He grew them on his farm.
- ❖ Today, most peas are grown to be canned or frozen. Only 5 percent are eaten fresh.

#### Student Sleuth

- ❖ What impact do legumes have on the soil? What is nitrogen fixing?  
*Legumes can take nitrogen from the atmosphere (nitrogen fixing) to replenish nitrogen in the soil. Farmers use legumes in a crop rotation to help replenish soil that has been depleted of nitrogen. This helps reduce fertilizer costs.*



### A Pod in Pea History

- ❖ Three possible origins of peas are: Middle Asia, Near East and Ethiopia.
- ❖ Carbonized peas found in the Near East and Switzerland date back as far as 10,000 years!
- ❖ Early pea varieties have been found among the ruins of Troy and in Egyptian tombs.
- ❖ In 1492 Christopher Columbus planted peas in the New World-Santo Domingo, where they were quickly adopted by indigenous people.
- ❖ Peas are easy to grow. They were planted by American colonists and by pioneers traveling west to California and Oregon.

### Home Grown Facts

- ❖ Green peas are among the top ten commonly eaten vegetables by California children. They eat them fresh, frozen or canned.
- ❖ Edible pod peas are grown year-round in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.
- ❖ Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Stanislaus counties produce more than 85 percent of the State's 19,000 tons of peas valued at about 29 million. 2004 data

### How Do Peas Grow?

- ❖ Peas do not need much to grow, just sunlight, cool weather and a little water.
- ❖ Pea plants were originally all vines or climbers. Today, we have peas that grow like a bush.

### Adventurous Activities

- ❖ Measure length and width of green peas.
- ❖ Weigh whole green peas.
- ❖ Take metric measurements.
- ❖ Convert to standard measurements.
- ❖ Shell peas and calculate average number in one pod.
- ❖ Guess how many peas in one half cup. Shell peas to find the answer.
- ❖ Weigh shelled peas (grams) to calculate the number of peas in one pound.



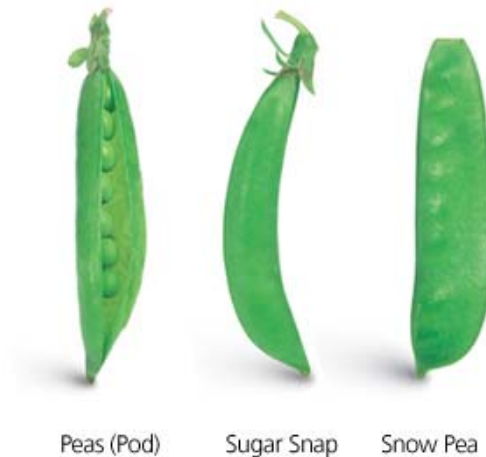
### Cafeteria Connections

- ❖ Organize a poster contest to promote a monthly theme, campaign or event such as:
  - National School Breakfast Week
  - National Nutrition Month

- National Agriculture Week
- Read Across America
- ❖ Work with an upper grade class to help promote the contest.
- ❖ Create different categories for artwork (e.g., grade levels, themes, advertisements).
- ❖ Display poster artwork in cafeteria throughout the month.

### Student Advocates

- ❖ National school breakfast week takes place in March, which is also National Nutrition Month. Promote these events at your school and encourage your classmates to start the day with a nutritious breakfast.
  - Invite classmates or another classroom to a breakfast challenge
  - Each morning, record in journals what you ate for breakfast
  - Graph daily how many students in class ate breakfast
  - At the end of the school day, record in journals how you felt during the day
  - Record entries for one week
  - Analyze breakfast meals (either by food groups or by nutrients consumed)
  - Compare with the journal entries describing how you felt



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