



## Lathyrus species

**Try something different! Lathyrus species are easy to grow:**

Sweet Peas have been grown for over 300 years because of their strong scent, elegance and delightful colours. Other *Lathyrus* species, both annual and perennial, are also worth growing and some have been cultivated for even longer than the Sweet Pea. All are very suitable for growing in soil or containers and those listed here are easy to grow.

### ANNUALS—Cultivation

Sow as for Sweet Peas and transfer seedlings into beds or containers. To prolong the flowering period, it is best to remove flowers when they begin to fade. Keep well watered. If cutting for the house, cut the flowers with part of the haulm attached. This will produce more side shoots and contain the height of the more vigorous species.



#### ***L. tingitanus***—the Tangier Pea

Native of the Western Mediterranean coast. Has been cultivated in Great Britain since 1680. A very vigorous climber that can reach 3 metres. Flowers prolifically with 2 or 3 flowers on each stem. Decorative narrow leaflets.

***L. tingitanus***: purple flowers

***L. tingitanus 'Roseus'***: pink flowers



#### ***L. annuus***—the Fodder Pea

Native of the Mediterranean region. Cultivated in Britain since 1621. Attains a height of 1.5 metres. Highly suitable for growing in tubs. Produces small flowers, 2-3 per stem. **Typically** yellow but '**Mrs R Penney**' has orange flowers and '**Hotham Red**' has red flowers.



#### ***L. sativus***—the Chickling Pea (Grass Pea in USA)

Widely cultivated since ancient times. Attains 1.5 metres. Flowers prolific but single. '**Azureus**' has blue flowers, '**Albus**' white, '**Cyaneus**' purple, '**Blue Stripe**' blue and white, '**Crescent Moon**' pink and mauve.



#### ***L. clymenum***—the Spanish Pea

Mediterranean countries and the Canaries. Attains a height of 1.5 metres. Usually 3-4 flowers per stem. New colours are being introduced. '**Chelsea**' is a superior form with typical purple / lavender flowers. '**Articulatus**' has red and white flowers.

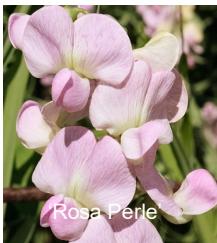


#### ***L. chloranthus***—the Green-flowered Pea

Found from Turkey to Iran. Can attain 2 metres and has decorative downy leaflets. Flowers 2-3 per stem, have varying amounts of red in the standard. '**Lemonade**' is pure yellow-green. '**Orange**' has a slight orange-red stripe.

## PERENNIALS—Cultivation

There are many perennial species, usually propagated by seed but some can be divided or softwood cuttings can be taken in Spring. Seeds can take months to germinate so are best sown in Spring. Chipping the seed coat can help germination.



### **L. latifolius**—the Everlasting Pea

Widely grown in Britain where it is sometimes called the Perennial Sweet Pea. Native to Central and Southern Europe.

Vigorous climber to 3 metres tall. Very reliable once established. 3-12 medium-sized flowers per stem.

**'Red Pearl'** has typical purple flowers; **'Wendy's Joy'** has mauve flowers; **'Rosa Perle'** has pink flowers; **'Blushing Bride'** has pale pink flowers; **'White Pearl'** has white flowers.



### **L. vernus**—the Spring Pea

30 cm high. Found in much of temperate Europe and Asia, as far as Siberia. Thrives in dappled shade. Ideal for containers. Many flowers per stem in April, with later flowers in July and October in some years. Various named forms with mauve shades, pink shades and white flowers; combined with broad, narrow and fine leaflets.



### **L. laevigatus**— the Smooth Pea

One of several similar species with cream flowers that turn to orange-brown. **L. aureus** flowers in May and is similar in height to *L. vernus*. The later they flower, the taller they get until **L. davidi** which makes 1.2m and flowers in July. Other similar species are occasionally available, sometimes incorrectly named.

### **L. nervosus**—Lord Anson's Pea

A native of South America, it is not reliable in Britain and may do best as a conservatory plant grown cool in Summer but frost-free in Winter. Can attain 2 metres high and has thick, round waxy leaflets. Is one of only 2 perennial *Lathyrus* to produce fragrant flowers. The other is the very similar **L. pubescens** which has thin, narrow, hairy leaflets. Both species take 2 or 3 years to flower.

### **L. sylvestris**—Narrow-leaved Everlasting Pea

Distributed throughout central Europe, it has been grown in Britain since at least the 16th century. Closely related to *L. latifolius* but more slender and attains 2 metres high. The flowers are smaller than *L. latifolius*. Tolerates light shade.



There are some 160 species of *Lathyrus* and about half are in cultivation so this selection describes only a small fraction of those that are decorative and easy to grow. The widest selection available can be found with National Collection holder, Roger Parsons: [www.rpsweetpeas.com](http://www.rpsweetpeas.com)



Join the National Sweet Pea Society at: [www.sweetpeas.org.uk](http://www.sweetpeas.org.uk)