



Dear Citizen Seed Trial educators,

Thank you so much for joining the 2023 Citizen Seed Trial. Our theme for this year's trial is early season crops. This will help align the crop harvest with the school year.

By now, you should have received an email from someone on our BC Seed Security team. If you have any specific questions about growing, seed saving, or engaging your class with the trial, they will be happy to answer your questions. We've attempted to match you with a staff member closest to your school.

We are planning to do an early season Citizen Seed Trial meet and greet for educators. This will be a great time to ask any questions, and share ideas and resources you're planning to use with other educators. This is also a great place to let us know how we can best support you throughout the trial. Please fill out the doodle poll below so we can figure out a best time to meet. We will likely pick the best two times to engage with as many folks as possible.

[Doodle poll](#)

The first step of starting the trial is planting the seeds. All of these crops are best to be direct seeded into your garden, however, if you have a good indoor seed starting space, to get a jump start on the season you could plant start the peas inside to engage your students earlier. Biodegradable pots would be best, but use what you got! Peas don't like having their roots disturbed so be gentle if you plan on transplanting. If you're looking for an experiment, a fun activity could be to start half of the pea seeds inside and the other half outside.

Farm2School BC has a great printable resource on growing radishes and peas (radishes pages 1-2 and peas pages 11-12), check it out [here](#). They also have other great resources, such as [regional crop planning guide](#).

The planting date will be the first piece of data you collect from the trial. Attached to this

email is printable data sheets, these make it easy for each of your students evaluate the crops on their own.

Here's a general guide for planting depending on your region:

Coastal BC

- Direct sow peas in late March to early April (or start indoors in March)
- Direct sow radishes and salad turnips in April

Interior BC

- Direct sow peas and radishes in April
- Direct sow salad turnips in the last week of April

Northern BC

- Direct sow all crops in May

For peas, we would recommend planting your seeds about 3-7 cm apart. There should be around 10 seeds per variety, this number makes it easy to calculate germination percentage (seeds germinated / # of seeds planted), if you're low on space try to plant at least five plants per variety. For radishes and salad turnips, the easiest way to plant is to sprinkle a line of seeds across your garden then thin out after a couple of weeks to about 10 cm apart and eyeball the germination differences (we don't ask for the percentage just a rating from 1-5). If you have time, feel free to count these seeds as well to properly calculate germination percentage.

Depending on your age group, you may be interested in turning the Citizen Seed Trial into a proper experiment using the scientific method. There's many different approaches you could encourage your students to go with it, students could hypothesize which variety will be ready to harvest first, how many peas they think will be ready to harvest by the end of the school year, which radish will be the spiciest, which crop will germinate best, which pea will grow the tallest, and many more. [Here's](#) a great printable resource, however, there's many others available online or feel free to develop your own (we'd love to share it with others).

Seed Saving

If you are interested in teaching your students about seed saving, we have a great set of resources on our website for you to use [here](#). There's presentation, activities, and much more to guide you through growing a seed crop.

Unfortunately, it's doubtful that any of these crops will be ready to harvest for seed during the school year. However, if you have someone to tend the garden over the summer, peas and radishes could be left to go to seed and be harvested at the beginning of the new

school year in Fall. This can be an opportunity to teach students about the importance of seed stewardship, even though they might not be the ones harvesting the seeds, they worked hard to make sure the next years students will carry on the genetics of these seeds.

As salad turnips are biennial plant and take two years to go to seed, we wouldn't recommend attempting to save these seeds. For the peas and the radishes, look at your data to see which variety did best in your region and choose to save that one for seed. Select one variety of radish and harvest all of the other varieties for food. Ideally aim to have at least five plants of both peas and radishes. For peas, rip out the other two varieties and leave one to grow (pea shoots can be tasty too!). Be aware that radishes will grow fairly tall when they go to seed and will likely need some sort of plant support. By the time Fall rolls around, most of the pods should be yellow, seeds will be hard, and ready to harvest.



Here's a cute image of a bee on a radish plant!

A couple great organizations to check out for extra resources include [BC Agriculture in the Classroom](#) and [Farm2School BC](#). We'll also continue to send periodic emails as reminder throughout the trial

Happy planting,

BC Seed Security Team

Extra Resources

[Citizen Seed Trial Facebook Group](#) - A public group for those signed up for this year and past years Citizen Seed Trial. A great place to share your photos and ask questions and help your fellow citizen seed trial grower

[Seed Saving Chart](#) - A useful chart with isolation distances, minimum populations sizes, and more. Check out other resources from the [Seed Savers Exchange](#).

[SeedLinked YouTube Channel](#) - Hosts various tutorial videos on how to use the Seedlinked platform to help you succeed in the Citizen Seed Trial. Check out this one on [Reviewing your Trial](#).

[What is a Variety Trial](#) - One of our webinars from last year that covers everything you need to know about variety trials

[Pea Growing Tips](#), [Salad Turnip Growing Tips](#), [Radish Growing Tips](#)

[A Farmers Guide to On-farm Variety Trials](#) - Please note this publication is a guide for the experienced growers. Don't be overwhelmed, rather use it as a tool to understand what a variety trial is used for

[Harvest Newsletter](#) - Sign up for our monthly newsletter and stay informed about all of our programs, events, announcements, and opportunities.

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