

# HOW TO HOLD YOUR OWN First PEAS to the Table Contest

## Based on the book **First Peas to the Table: How Thomas Jefferson Inspired a School Garden**

written by Susan Grigsby, illustrated by Nicole Tadgell, published by Albert Whitman & Co.

Thomas Jefferson, our third president, held a pea growing contest with his neighbors every spring. The first person to have a bowl of peas ready to bring *to the table* was declared the winner and would invite his neighbors over for a dinner that included a dish of peas.

### 1. WHAT TYPES OF PEAS SHOULD WE GROW?

The contest in the book was for growing garden shelling peas (often called English Peas or Garden Peas), not snow peas or snap peas – both of which have edible shells. Garden Peas, which must be shelled as the pod is not edible, come in many varieties. Your students may wish to strategize as to which varieties of Garden Peas to plant. The calculations of harvest time and yield, as well as plant spacing, provide for connections to the math curriculum.

### 2. WHEN SHOULD WE PLANT?

You first need to identify your garden zone: <http://www.garden.org/zipzone/>

Peas do best in cool weather, and are therefore generally planted about a month before the last frost date for your zone. However, weather conditions vary from year to year and bold gardeners often experiment with earlier plantings. It is often advised that the soil needs to be 45 degrees or warmer for the peas to germinate.

Average last frost dates are listed here:

<http://www.burpee.com/gardening/content/gygg/growing-zone/growingzoneinfo.html>

A growing calendar with suggested planting dates is listed here:

<http://www.burpee.com/gygg/growingCalendarNoZipCode.jsp>

### 3. JOURNALS AND CROWNS

We have included a journal form (page 3) and certificates for the students (pages 4 and 5). Suggestion: Have each student keep a journal in which they can record measurements and observations, draw, and make notes on a weekly basis. We invite you to post pictures of your own pea planting experiences on our [First Peas to the Table Facebook page](#).

### 4. PEA GROWING TIPS

There are many sites that provide tips for growing peas. A few are noted below:

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/peas.cfm>

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/M1249.html>

[http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG\\_Garden\\_2005-09.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG_Garden_2005-09.pdf)

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scene9697.html>

#### 4. PEA GROWING TIPS (*continued*)

<http://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/chiwonlee/plsc211/student%20papers/articles04/Austen%20Germolus/Bruce%20Sukut/gardenpeas.htm>

<http://www.burpee.com/vegetables/peas/all-about-peas-article10250.html>

#### 5. WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

The Activity Guide for *First Peas to the Table: How Thomas Jefferson Inspired a School Garden* notes several activities and resources that connect to school curriculum. It can be downloaded from the Resources page of [www.albertwhitman.com](http://www.albertwhitman.com). There are additional resources noted in the book.

For general school gardening information, there are several good sites including:

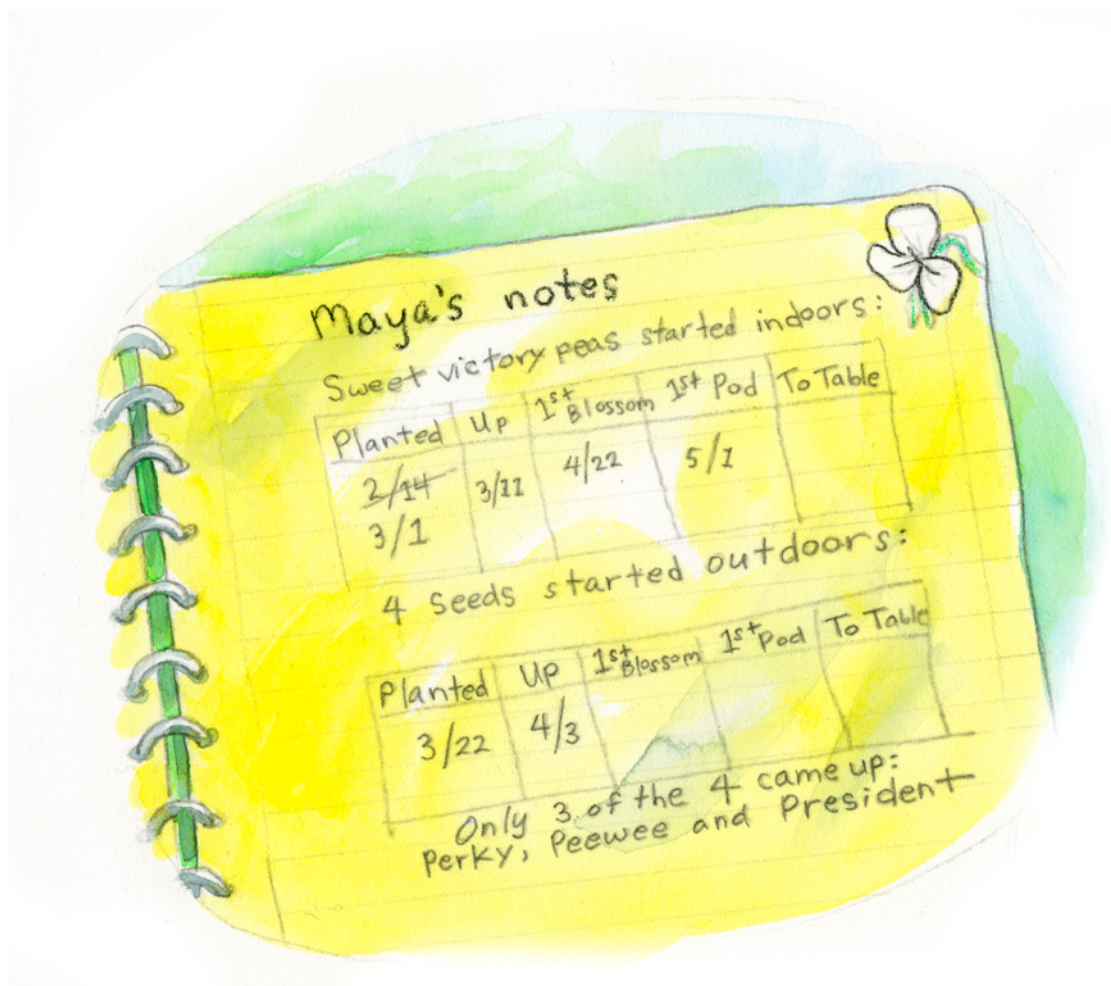
The California School Garden Network's guide "Gardens for Learning": <http://www.csgn.org/page.php?id=36>

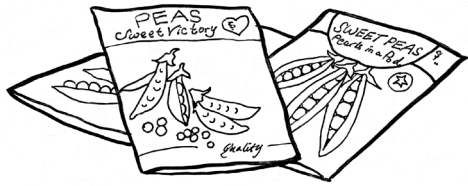
LifeLab's "School Garden Resources": <http://www.lifelab.org/foreducators/schoolgardens/#lessons>

#### 6. GARDEN JOURNAL

A printable form is included below.

The students' garden journal page will look similar to this:





# First **PEAS** to the Table Contest

## GARDEN JOURNAL FORM

Participating Students:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



<i>Seed Variety</i>	<i>#Seeds Planted</i>	<i>Date Planted</i>	<i>Date Sprouted</i>	<i>Date 1st Blossom</i>	<i>Date 1st Pod</i>	<i>Date and Time to Table</i>

Date Harvested:

Quantity:

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



# *Certificate of Participation*

\_\_\_\_\_ (name)

participated in the

*First Peas to the Table Pea Growing Contest*

and harvested \_\_\_\_\_ cups of peas

on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).



# Certificate of Award

\_\_\_\_\_

(name)

and team members are the winners of the

*First Peas to the Table Pea Growing Contest* for \_\_\_\_\_.

(school name)

They harvested \_\_\_\_\_ cups of peas

on \_\_\_\_\_.

(date)