

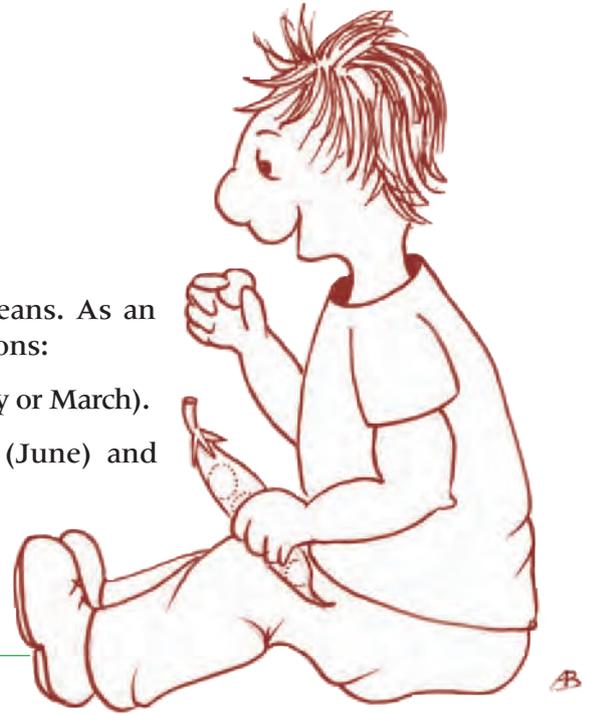
Parts of a plant

➔ *Teacher Guidance*

Growing a sugar snap pea

Plants commonly grown in schools include sunflowers and beans. As an alternative, we suggest a sugar snap pea for the following reasons:

- It is relatively hardy and can be planted early in the year (February or March).
- It has a short life cycle and will flower within 12 weeks (June) and produce peas by the end of the summer term (July).
- The peas produced are safe and enjoyable for pupils to eat (even when raw).



Resources

Outside

- Tub (e.g. wooden or plastic)
- Potting compost (or garden soil)
- Netting for support (wire or plastic)
- Twigs, sticks, bamboo canes or string (for support)
- Sugar snap pea seeds



Inside (into pots)

- Flower pots (e.g. 16 cm diameter)
- Growing medium / potting compost
- Stakes (e.g. wooden kebab sticks)
- Sugar snap pea seeds

Planting

1. Directly into a garden area or tub

- Sow the seeds straight into a small garden area or tub, outside, in February or March.
- Follow the instructions on the seed packet.
- If possible, prepare the garden area beforehand by digging in some garden compost.



2. In small pots in the classroom

Alternatively, peas can be started in small pots in the classroom, then planted outside later.

- Use any planting system you are familiar with – or try the SAPS planting system for radishes (see *Student Sheet 9 on the SAPS website*).
- Avoid over-watering or drying out – these are common problems when growing plants in the classroom. The SAPS system helps prevent these problems.
- Before transplanting into the garden or tubs, you need to ‘harden off’ these seedlings by placing them outside during the daytime for about a week. (This lets them get used to the colder conditions outside.)



Figure 6.
Sugar snap
pea plant.

In a trial run, we sowed some sugar snap peas in a large flower pot (approx. 20 cm diameter), using a mixture of potting compost with some vermiculite. We placed the pot in a plastic tray with water to maintain its water supply. We kept it under a light bank at a normal room temperature. Seeds sown on 20 March had emerged by 26 March and there were several healthy pea pods on 1 May. Very little maintenance was needed.



Figure 7.
Pea flower with
tendrils.



Figure 8.
Mature pea
pod.

Care

- Seedlings need normal garden management, including weeding.
- Water the seedlings and growing pea plants in dry weather.
- Most varieties need support. You can push a few branched twigs into the ground beside the growing peas or make them into a tent for the pea plants to scramble over. Alternatively you can support them with strings or with wire netting or plastic netting.

Further activities

This activity can provide plenty of opportunities for cross-curricular links, or links to other science topics. See *SAPS website for more information*.

Curriculum links

National Curriculum (Sc2)

KS1: 3b, 3c; KS2: 3d

QCA guidelines – Scheme of work

Unit 1B; Unit 2B

Scottish ISE 5-14 framework/attainment targets

LT-B2.3, LT-B2.4

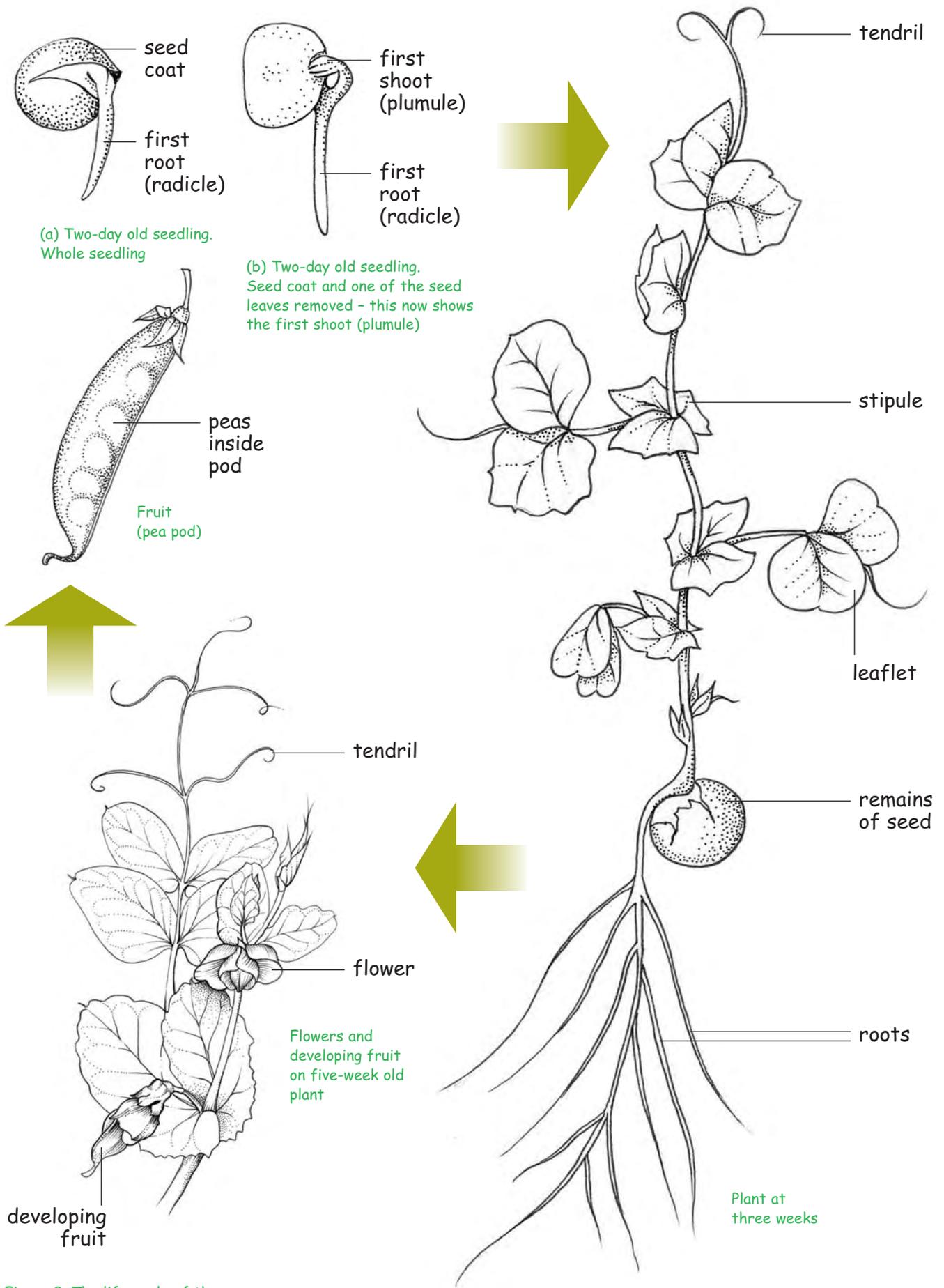


Figure 9. The life-cycle of the sugar snap pea.

For further information about structure of the pea leaf (stipule, leaflet, tendril), see *Background information for teachers*.