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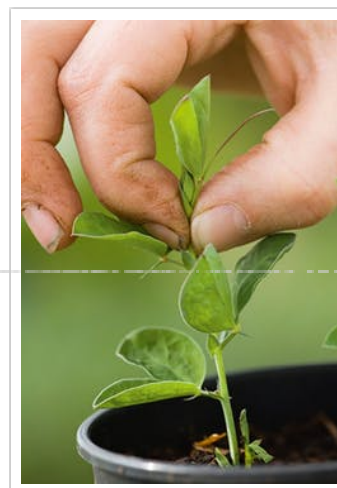
layering sweet peas

Posted in All Gardening Advice, Shrubs and Climbers, April, May, June, Sweet Peas, Spring, Summer on 1st May 2019

If you want sweet peas with spectacularly long, perfectly straight stems and lots of large flowers on each stem, it's a good idea to layer them, but this does involve tonnes of work.

When you are ready to plant out your sweet pea seedlings, remove all but one stem growing from the base.

1. Firstly, create an A-frame from 2.5m straight hazel or bamboo sticks, one stick per plant.
2. Prepare the ground well, by digging in a barrow load or organic material around the base of your frame. Farmyard manure is good for sweet peas as it helps retain water on a freely drained soil and gently feeds these hungry plants. On very freely-drained soil, tear newspapers into strips and put these in the trench too as they'll help hold onto water.
3. As one stem grows, pinch out all side branches (as with tomatoes), as they form. The energy then goes into one momentous stem, which will develop into something the width of a finger, rather than bushing out into several thinner shoots.
4. As more stems grow, regularly tie the stem onto its cane and when they start to flower, pick, pick, pick.
5. Once the stems reach the tops of their canes, untie them and run them along the ground, to three canes further along. Then train the tip of the plant onto that cane and continue to tie them as they grow. This of course doubles the amount of flowers for picking, before having to pinch out the tips, as they reach the top of their cane.



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