

To Pea or not to Pea....

added by Hen Corner to the River Cottage Community
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Welcome back to Hen Corner!

This week we're asking why only half our peas are germinating, reporting back from Chiswick House Kitchen Garden and preparing for a Shook Swarm...but first here is Tip 2 in our series specifically looking at how easy it is to keep chickens in an urban environment.

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I'm pleased to say that we have done a good job at sowing seed for the propagators to get a head start on our kitchen garden crops for the summer.



So far we've sown 102 chillies, peppers & tomatoes, 16 bush tomatoes, 8 aubergines, 12 melons, 24 mange tout and 24 peas. That's 186 potential plants along with a tray of onions & leeks... I'm wondering if it will all fit into the raised beds and we haven't even started on the brassicas and squashes yet!!!!

As you can see from the picture, whilst the mange tout are doing well (on right), the traditional peas (on left) are struggling with only 7/24 germinated so far and those that have are quite wimpy; is it the soil or is it the seed? I'll keep an eye on them and hope they catch up soon...



It was a real privilege to enjoy a personal tour of [Chiswick House Kitchen Garden](#) recently, a wonderful local project that began in February 2005 by a voluntary group dedicated to reviving the gardens and teaching local residents about horticulture and growing food. Although it was a wet and windy morning when I

arrived, I was encouraged to see around 15 volunteers wrapped up warm and waiting for instruction from Karen Roberts the Community Gardener who heads up the team. Over tea we talked about chickens, bees and courses to empower others to have a go... Maybe we can encourage each other as we pursue a 'little bit of country life in London'?

Other News:

- I took a cake with me to the [Ealing and District Beekeepers Association](#) (*it always helps when meeting new people!*) and have discovered that, due to reported levels of [European Foul Brood](#), I need to do a 'Shook Swarm' and shake all 30,000 bees off the frames in their current hive into a new hive with new empty frames, this allows the old frames, that may contain EFB, to be destroyed managing spread of infection. Fortunately, the very kind Andy Pedley said he would help me!
- We've started preparing the kitchen garden for Spring by weeding and removing moss from the brick path.
- We gave the fruit and nut trees and bushes, all 15 of them, a winter wash; not to clean them but as an organic way to remove bugs and pests that hide over winter ready to damage this year's harvest.

Jobs for next week:

- Sow some brussel sprouts, cabbages and cauliflowers indoors
- Sow some carrots directly into the raised beds
- Work out a long-term way to protect our goldfish from the huge heron that came calling this week



Have a good week yourself...

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