



American Peony Society

Seed Program Information



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General Information

Peony seeds are easy to grow, but require some patience due to their long germination process. Peony seeds require a long damp warm period, followed by a damp cool period and then another damp warm period to produce their roots and first leaves. This is typically accomplished by planting seeds outdoors in summer, overwintering them in their planted space and allowing them to grow in the warming spring soil. Seedlings usually take 3 to 5 years to bloom for their first time. See APS' [Germinating Peony Seeds Outdoors](#) (recommended over other methods) or [Germinating Peony Seeds Indoors](#).

Peonies are not true to cultivar from seed! In other words, seed coming from any cultivar will not be the same as its parent. Flower color, form and size of seed grown plants are often quite different than their parents. Plant characteristics will also be highly variable. Thus, as an example, seed grown from a red double formed flower may produce white flowers of single form or numerous other variations. Seed grown peonies are almost always quite beautiful, but most will not be of registration quality. However, they are often desirable garden plants!

All seeds are packaged with the name of the seed parent and may have additional information included. Seeds are dry and have been carefully selected for viability prior to packaging. Number of seed per packet will depend upon cultivar parent, but are an excellent value compared to other packaged seed. Mixed seed packets often have the largest volume of seeds and are the best value.

Seed Types

- 1) Lactiflora seed: *Paeonia lactiflora* cultivars are the most common group of herbaceous peonies and are best known for their fragrance, cut flower properties and ease of growth. Flower forms run the entire range, from single to Japanese, to semi-double to double to everything in between. Seeds generally take 4 to 7 years to become flowering size. For more information on this group and other peonies visit the APS website's many resources. For reference, the [Peony Registry](#), found on the APS website, has many images of cultivar flowers occurring in APS seed offerings.
- 2) Herbaceous Hybrid seed: Herbaceous Hybrid peonies are those arising from hybridization of various species or from crosses of existing hybrids. Flower form, flower size, plant habits and bloom times are highly variable from cultivar to cultivar. Most bloom before *P. lactiflora* cultivars. Unique coloration and other attributes are often seen in this group. Seeds generally take 4 to 7 years to become flowering size. For more information on this group and other peonies visit the APS website's many resources. For reference, the [Peony Registry](#), found on the APS website, has many images of cultivar flowers occurring in APS seed offerings.
- 3) Species (Herbaceous and Woody) seed: Peony species origins are in nature (wild peonies). They are rare plants in nature and in American gardens. Most are small in stature and make excellent rock garden candidates. They all require sharply drained soils with good air circulation, but are among the most interesting and sought after plants in the world. For reference, see the [Species Peonies](#) page for further information and images.
- 4) Suffruticosa (Woody peony) seed: Suffruticosa peonies are often referred to as "Tree peonies", and are plants with persistent woody stems. They produce large other worldly flowers and bloom before most herbaceous peonies. Culture is similar to other peonies and are not difficult to grow in USDA Hardiness Zones 4 to 8. *P. suffruticosa* is a hybrid swarm developed over the millennia in China and furthered in Japan, Europe and the United States. Most are historic cultivars and predate peony registration procedures, but a number can be found in the [Peony Registry](#).



5) Rockii/Suffruticosa Hybrid (Woody peony) seed: Rockii/Suffruticosa Hybrid peonies are often referred to as "Tree peonies", and are plants with persistent woody stems. *P. rockii* is a species which have been crossed with Suffruticosa cultivars to create a multi-generational race of hybrids. *P. rockii* is a cold hardy, vigorous, large flowered and often large growing species. Resulting hybrids often prove to have these sought after characteristics. When crossed with Suffruticosa Group plants, the offspring are generally more vigorous and retain many of the finest qualities of both parents. These hybrids usually exhibit large basal petal flares of dark color, making them striking garden subjects. Additionally, some cultivars make excellent landscape plants when not in bloom. Many American and European cultivars may be found in the [Peony Registry](#). Chinese cultivars, in many cases, are not registered and are not represented in the Peony Registry. This group is highly recommended!



6) Lutea Hybrid (Woody peony) seed: Lutea Hybrids are often referred to as "Tree Peonies", and are plants with persistent woody stems. Lutea Hybrids arise from cross of *P. lutea*/*P. delavayi*/*P. potanini* x Suffruticosa. Advanced generation crosses between existing cultivars have restored fertility in some cultivars and more seed production is now being experienced by hybridizers. Lutea Hybrid seeds are not typically available due to infertility and resulting lack of seed production. This group has a wide range of colors and forms which are not represented in the Suffruticosa group plants and Rockii Influence Hybrids. Plants are typically shorter and produce numerous ground shoots. Lutea hybrids are capable of blooming on new wood, unlike most Suffruticosa and Rockii Hybrid Influence plants. Thus loss of stems due to winter kill or other reasons may not impact flower production greatly. Seeds of this group should use the [Germinating Peony Seeds Indoors](#) method for best results. For reference, the [Peony Registry](#), found on the APS website, has many images of cultivar flowers occurring in APS seed offerings.



Flower Forms



Ordering Terms

United States & Canada

You must be a current American Peony Society Member to order seeds and have a shipping address in the United States or Canada. Please use the online ordering system to place a seed order for U.S. or Canada delivery only. Delivery costs: United States destinations are \$8.00 – any number of seed packets; Canada destinations are \$14.00 – any number of seed packets. All deliveries are made using the Postal Service only. APS is not responsible for lost, stolen, misplaced, damaged and undeliverable mail. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery. All sales are final (no refunds).

***Current Membership Required to receive seeds. Non-members who have ordered seeds will incur financial fees, which will be subtracted from their refund. Please purchase a membership to receive this benefit**

Other Member Countries

Europe and China and some other Member destination countries are now required to secure: 1) a phytosanitary plant health certificate; 2) shipping reservations with an export/import company; 3) distribution/delivery arrangements to the final destination. APS will not ship seeds overseas without these arrangements and does not guarantee delivery to overseas addresses. Overseas Members wanting to order seeds should email seeds@americanpeonysociety.org for further information, as they cannot be ordered online. Delivery arrival of seeds will be dependent upon your arrangements with the shipper.