Pigeon Pea (*Cajan cajan*)

It is a short-lived perennial shrub, native to tropical parts of Asia and Africa. It is one of the most important legume crops in rainfed agriculture in the semi-arid tropics. In the absence of freezing weather, it fruits twice a year in grand eruptions of colorful flowers and abundant pea pods.

**Soil:** Pigeon pea grows well in most soils, but is sensitive to water logging. As with most legumes, it associates with soil bacteria of the *Rhizobium* genus to produce nitrogen fertilizer. If you have no legumes growing on your land, you probably have no *Rhizobium* either. We inoculate our potted plants and include inoculum with our seeds.

**Water:** Pigeon peas are very drought resistant and can be grown in areas with as little as 65cm average annual rainfall. Irrigation, even during droughts, will probably not yield any benefit.

**Sun:** full

**Cold:** Pigeon peas are killed by freezing temperatures, but often sprout from the stump in spring, especially if it is protected with mulch. They are short-lived perennials and should be replanted regularly anyway. Early freezes can cut short the fall production.

**Pruning:** Frost-killed stems should be removed.

**Propagation:** seed, plant 1-2 inches deep.

**Pests:** No pests seem to be problematic in North Florida though many are reported in this document: [http://www.infonet-biovision.org/default/ct/130/crops](http://www.infonet-biovision.org/default/ct/130/crops)

**Other problems:** Growth can be spindly and lopsided, which can frustrate planning of garden paths.

**Harvesting, storage, and preparation:** Pigeon peas are an important source of protein in many tropical areas, and balance the amino acids of grains. In tropical areas they fruit during the spring and fall. The full green pods can be boiled like edamame. The dried seeds can be cooked like any dried pea. The dried seeds can also be sprouted and cooked, which may improve digestion. Young shoots and leaves are cooked and eaten in Ethiopia.

**Additional references:**