



PEANUTS

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL



A peanut is not a nut, but they are plants in the Fabaceae legume family. Peanuts are native to South America, Central America, and Mexico. Peanuts are annual plants and grow 1 to 1.5 ft tall. Peanuts grow best in light, sandy loam soil with a pH of 5.9–7. Their capacity to fix nitrogen means peanuts benefit little from nitrogen-containing fertilizer, and they improve soil fertility. Therefore, they are valuable in crop rotations.



A machine is used to cut off the main root of the peanut plant by cutting through the soil just below the level of the peanut pods. The machine lifts the “bush” from the ground and shakes it, then inverts the bush, leaving the plant upside down on the ground to keep the peanuts out of the soil. This allows the peanuts to dry slowly to a little less than a third of their original moisture level over a period of three to four days. Traditionally, peanuts were pulled and inverted by hand.

After the peanuts have dried sufficiently, they are threshed, removing the peanut pods from the rest of the bush. It is important peanuts are dried properly and stored in dry conditions. If they are too high in moisture, they may become infected by the mold fungus *Aspergillus flavus*.



Peanuts are a very good source of monounsaturated fats, the type of fat that is important in a heart-healthy diet. Peanuts feature an array of other nutrients such as vitamin E, niacin, folate, protein, and manganese. About 0.6% of the United States population report that they experience allergic reactions to peanut exposure.

Peanuts are a favorite food often eaten alone as a snack food or mixed into candy, cookies, pies, and other bakery products. Peanut butter, made by grinding the roasted seeds, accounts for about one half of the peanuts grown in the United States. Worldwide, however, peanuts are grown chiefly to provide peanut oil. Farmers in Africa and Asia grow about 90% of the world's peanuts. Many southwest Oklahoma farmers raise peanuts.

NO BAKE CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER BARS



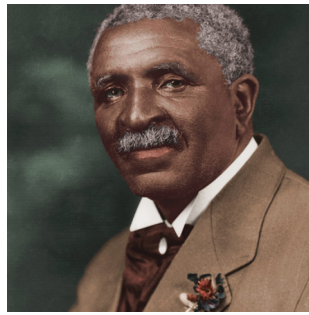
INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup salted butter, melted
- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup + 2 tablespoons of creamy peanut butter, divided
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS:

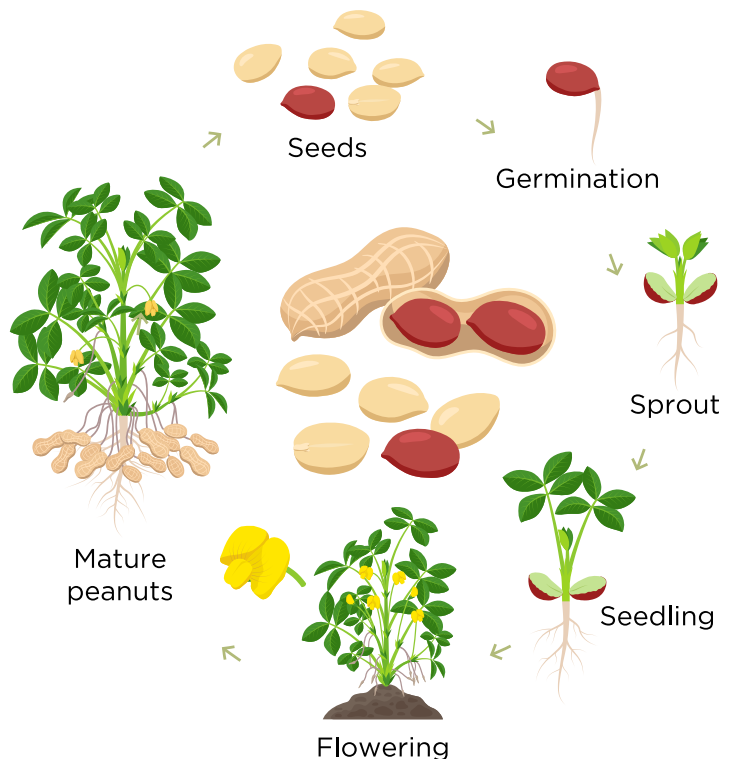
1. Line an 8×8 or 9×9 inch square baking pan with aluminum foil or parchment paper. Set aside.
2. Mix the melted butter, graham cracker crumbs, and confectioners' sugar together in a medium bowl. Stir in 1 cup (250g) of peanut butter, then press evenly into the prepared baking pan.
3. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons of peanut butter with the chocolate chips in the microwave or on the stove. Stir until smooth. Spread over the peanut butter layer.
4. Chill in the refrigerator until completely firm, at least 2 hours. Allow to sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before cutting. Serve chilled. Setting them out for a few hours at room temperature for serving is ok.
5. Cover leftover bars tightly and refrigerate for up to 1 week.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER



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PEANUT PLANT LIFE CYCLE



FUN FACT!

There are enough peanuts in one acre to make over 30,000 peanut butter sandwiches.