

Practical Peanuts

Ag in 10 Minutes a Day!

Do you like PB&J for lunch? Maybe a bag of roasted, and salted peanuts? Or Pad Thai with a spicy peanut sauce? Would you believe that one of the most popular, most versatile, most delicious nuts is not a “nut” at all?

What are Peanuts?

Peanuts, also sometimes called goobers or ground nuts, are not a nut, but a member of the **legume** family. They are more closely related to beans and peas. They are a good source of plant-based protein and healthy fat. Peanuts grow in warm climates in slightly sandy soil. The top peanut producing countries are China, India, Nigeria, The Southern United States and Sudan.

The peanut plant has some remarkably interesting features. The plants grow about 18 inches tall and are covered with green leaves. The leaves close at night, and open during the day, a phenomenon called **nyctinasty**, believed to help plants conserve moisture. Peanuts flower above the ground, then “fruit” below ground. Once the flowers fall off, the plant forms a peg which grows down into the soil, eventually maturing into a peanut pod. Peanut pods grow up to 3 inches long and contain up to 4 peanuts.

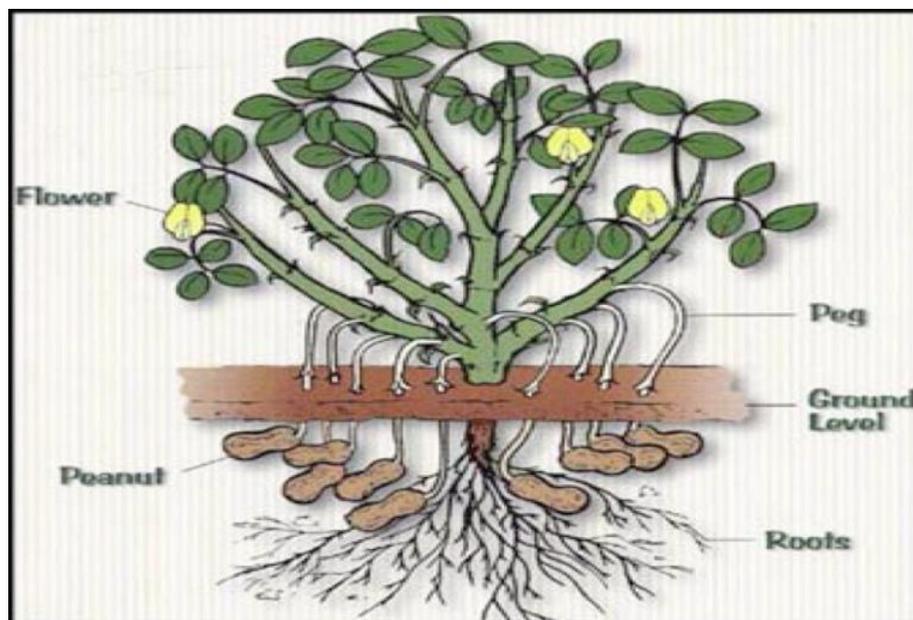


Image from [It's Time to Harvest Your Peanuts! - Kansas City Community Gardens \(kccg.org\)](https://www.kccg.org/)

Who was George Washington Carver?

George Washington Carver was an agricultural scientist and inventor. George was born to a young, enslaved woman sometime in the early 1860's. He was kidnapped as a baby along with his mother. Their owner, Moses Carver, found George, but not his mother. Slavery ended with the Civil War, but George was still a very little boy, so Moses continued to care for him.

Name _____

Date _____

As a child, George was always extremely interested in plants, and was known in his community as the “Plant Doctor” because he had a special ability to help plants grow and stay healthy. George wanted to go to school, but in most places, he was not allowed because he was black. He had to travel to find schools that would accept him.

Eventually, he was welcomed at Iowa State University, and became the first Black student and the first Black professor there. In 1896, Booker T. Washington invited him to Alabama to head the agriculture department at Tuskegee Institute.

George was especially interested in peanuts and discovered many fascinating things about them. He developed a list of 300 different uses for peanuts and peanut by-products. He learned that peanuts improve soil quality through **nitrogen fixation**. This was especially important because many crops use up the **nutrients** in the soil. George introduced farmers to the idea of **crop rotation**, for example, planting peanuts one season and cotton the next. This practice helps keep the soil healthy without having to **fortify** the fields with additional nutrients. It also provides farmers with more variety of products. George was such an expert in agricultural science that he was invited to speak to Congress about the importance of peanuts in 1921, which earned him the nickname “Peanut Man”.



Image from [George Washington Carver - Pioneering Agricultural Scientist \(blackinventor.com\)](https://www.blackinventor.com/george-washington-carver-pioneering-agricultural-scientist/)



Image from [Peanut Facts - Fresh Virginia Peanuts, Cashews, Pecans, Nuts \(newsomspeanutshop.com\)](https://newsomspeanutshop.com/peanut-facts-fresh-virginia-peanuts-cashews-pecans-nuts/)

What are some Uses of Peanuts?

Peanuts are an exceptional choice of healthy protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals. They help prevent disease, are good for maintaining healthy weight, blood pressure, memory, and clear skin. A one ounce serving of peanuts provides you with 166 calories, 6.7 grams of protein, 2.3 grams of fiber, 6.1 grams of carbohydrates and 14.1 grams of healthy fats. Peanuts are also gluten and cholesterol free.

Besides the countless health benefits of peanuts, just a few of the other uses that George Washington Carver discovered for peanuts and their by-products are flour, milk oil, margarine, animal feed, laundry detergent, medicine, cosmetics, lotion, dyes, paints, paper, and fuel. Peanuts are a practical, popular, power-packed plant!



Practical Peanuts – Reading Passage

Directions: Read each question and fill in the best answer.

1. Which plant is a peanut **MOST** like?

- A. Walnut
- B. Corn
- C. Beans
- D. Wheat

2a. What is **nyctinasty**?

- A. A type of leaf
- B. An Insect
- C. Water
- D. A characteristic of some plants

2b. How do you know your answer to 2a is correct?

- A. It is explained in paragraph #3
- B. It is explained in paragraph #6
- C. It is explained in the last paragraph
- D. It was invented by George Washington Carver

3. What is the purpose of **crop rotation**?

- A. Turning plants around
- B. Keeps soil healthy
- C. Plants need less water
- D. Plants need more fertilizer

4. How many different uses of did George Washington Carver come up with?

- A. 300
- B. 1896
- C. 13
- D. 1860

5. What amount of protein does an ounce of peanuts contain?

- A. 2.3 grams
- B. 166 grams
- C. 14.1 grams
- D. 6.7 grams

Extended Response: Use details from your own experience and information from the article in your response.

George Washington Carver was successful because he continued to pursue his goals, even when it wasn't easy. Describe a time when you succeeded at something even when you thought you might not.

Peanut Facts

- Two United States Presidents were peanut farmers, Thomas Jefferson, and Jimmy Carter
- Peanut Butter was not invented by George Washington Carver. There have been varieties of peanut butter known since at least 950BC
- It takes about 540 peanuts to make a 12-ounce jar of peanut butter
- March 15th is National Peanut Lovers Day
- The world record for throwing a peanut is 124' 4"



Name _____

Date _____

A FUN RECIPE TO TRY AT HOME – 3 INGREDIENT PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

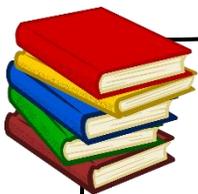
Ingredients:

- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg

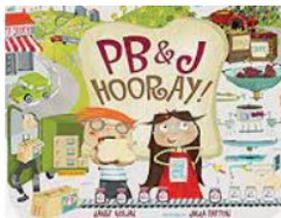


Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
3. Measure 1 cup peanut butter and 1 cup sugar into a mixing bowl.
4. Add one egg and stir all ingredients together.
5. Form dough into 12 balls, about 1 inch each, and place on the parchment lined cookie sheet.
6. Flatten cookies with a fork to make a cross pattern.
7. Bake for 6 – 8 minutes, or until slightly brown.



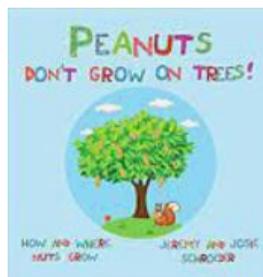
CHECK OUT THESE BOOKS



PB & J HOORAY!

BY JANET NOLAN

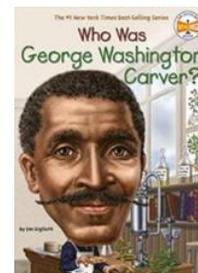
The story of how a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is made, from the very beginning. How peanuts, grapes and wheat grow to become the ingredients in your sandwich.



PEANUTS DON'T GROW ON TREES

BY JEREMY SCHROEDER

An educational book about where peanuts and tree nuts grow around the world.



WHO WAS GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER?

BY JIM GIGLIOTTI

Dive into the life of George Washington Carver and his extraordinary talents and dedication to agriculture and education.

