

WVNPS's Featured Flower of the Quarter is...

Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*)

About Sweet Pea: Sweet pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*) is a member of the legumes family (Fabaceae). In West Virginia, this beautiful flowering plant is found in old records from Monongalia and Marion counties. Sweet pea is an annual climbing vine, growing to a height of over 6 feet. The leaves are pinnate with two leaflets and a terminal tendrils, which twines around supporting plants and structures helping the sweet pea to climb. In the wild, the flowers are purple and 2-3.5 centimeters wide. However, due to horticultural innovations, sweet pea's flowers can vary in size and color. Flowers can be found on a peduncle in groups of 1-4 and almost two inches wide.

History of Pea Plants: As you may recall, Gregor Mendel is recognized as the "Father of Modern Genetics" for his work with the cross breeding of pea plants (*Pisum sativum*) with different characteristics. The sweet pea plant has been used in a similar way. It is highly suitable as a genetic subject because of its ability to self-pollinate and it's easily observed Mendelian traits such as color, height, and petal form. In fact, many genetics were discovered or confirmed in this species!



Source: www4.clikpic.com

Remember to check out the next "Featured Flower of the Quarter"!