

INTRODUCTION

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Lathyrus odoratus, L. (Sweet peas) originated in Sicily, the species name given by Linnaeus was on account of its delicate perfume. There are three types of Sweet pea; Summer-flowering, Winter-flowering and Spring-flowering. The winter-flowering type which is usually grown in Egypt, was originated by Anthony C. Zvolanek in January 1892.

Sweet peas is grown commercially in Egypt as well as many countries having mild climate. Sweet peas can be used as an ornamental cut flower, and for flower exhibition. The plant has different varieties bearing flowers with attractive colour and fine fragrant and recently as a source of essential oil.

The long blooming of plants affords for a garden land-scape and renders it as one profitable crop in the florist's industry.

Sweet peas flowers as a source of essential oil

The production of Sweet peas flowers is inexpensive, this short lived annual plant produces large number of flowers highly fragrant. Hence, the plant can be grown on large scale as an aromatic plant for essential oil extraction.

The extracted concrete may be used in the local and foreign perfume industry. The cultivated area with aromatic plants in Egypt considerably increased in the last decades; such increase is due to the highly favourable conditions prevailing in Egypt, the low labour cost, besides the increasing demand of the superior essential oil.

The aim of this investigation was to study the effect of different fertilizer levels of phosphorus, potassium and iron on the plant growth, flower yield and concrete oil percentages in the flowers of Sweet peas.