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(Desperately Seeking) Legume Inoculant, Or, A tale of Two Agways

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This happened to me about 11 months ago. I won't let it happen again and I'm mentioning it just now so it doesn't happen to you. Legume inoculant may or may not be necessary for maximum yields, but professional farmers use it, so I figure it makes sense to hedge my bets. (Dosage is critical with many amendments, but inoculant is pretty innocuous; you're not like to mess anything up by adding it when you don't really need it.)

[1]

Background: The day is warm and so is the soil. I decide to p ush it and plant some peas, even though the forsythia is only swollen instead of blooming.

I look in the seedbox... Gee, I thought I bought some.

Off to the nearest Agway, in Millbrook. We think of it as the hunt country supply store, heavy on the dogs and horses, but it does have seeds and a few other gardenly items. No inoculant, however. The nice young man behind the back desk says he?s been unable to order any, that everybody seems to be out. Seed potatoes, too, he volunteers, saying there seems to be a sudden surge in vegetable growing.

Perhaps the more agricultural Agway not far away, we both think. But when I call I get an earful of how they no longer carry inoculant because nobody ever bought it and they got stuck (it doesn?t keep). Farm seed now comes pre-inoculated, says the man on the other end of the phone, and nobody around here grows vegetables any more. The place is full of suburbanites and weekenders, he complains, ? they don?t even mo w their own lawns.?

After he assures me HE hasn?t seen any bump in home gardening, we have a bout of mutual moaning about the disappearance of dairy farms and then I go call Adams, our best-stocked garden supply store, which I knew all along would have it but they are not close by.

Good thing I did, they only had 3 packets left although more was on order.

I asked them to set one aside and then rushed in and got it and the moral of this little tale is don?t assume it?s going to be there, as I have done for decades but never will do again. If you have to mail order, might as well go to Organic Growers Supply [2], a division of Fedco Seeds. Be warned the extensive catalog of fertilizers, soil amendments, cover crops, etc. is way more tempting than those categories suggest.

Originally published, with more pictures, atIn Kitchen and Garden[3].

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[2] http://www.fedcoseeds.com/ogs.htm

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