



national science week 2018

Bea Contreras

Peas-ed to meet you!

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Science has taken me on some amazing journeys! I started studying science in my home town of Barcelona, in Spain. I did a Bachelors and Masters degree in plant genetics.

I've moved across the world to study peas in Tasmania. That's right – peas!! The little, round, green vegetable that you have for dinner. Yum!!

I'm looking at how light affects flowering in pea plants. I grow normal peas, and also plants that have a small amount of variation in the genes in their DNA. I grow each of the plants in different light conditions to compare them, and also to look at flowering patterns. Did you know that pea plants have pretty little flowers?

This probably makes it sounds like I am a farmer, out in the fields all day, but this is not the case!! Most of the time, I work in a laboratory. I am one of the peculiar people wearing a super white – or not so white – lab coat and gloves.

I get to do some really amazing things in the lab, like freezing peas to -196 degrees C, and then smashing them into extremely small pieces, to get their DNA out. Sometimes I take small parts of pea DNA, called vectors, and put them inside a bacteria and then grow the bacteria. This is how scientists tell what each gene in the DNA does.

Find me on Twitter at [@beacontrerasp](https://twitter.com/beacontrerasp)

For more information:

www.utas.edu.au/plant-science

