

How to grow beans

Pole Beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*)

Edamame (*Glycine max*)

Fava beans (*Vicia faba*)

Family: Fabaceae (Legumes)

Hardiness: Tender

Ease of growing: Easy

Nutrient needs: Low

Water needs: High

Common propagation: Seed

Seed facts

Germination temperature: 60°F to 85°F

Germination time: 6 to 18 days

Depth of planting: 1"

Viability: 3 years

Direct sow: May to June

Planning facts

Typical spacing: 2" to 4" in 24" rows

Plants per square foot: 4 to 9

Time to harvest: 60 to 100 days

Variety selection

Beans are a large and widespread subfamily within the even larger pea family. More than 500 cultivated varieties are available. Common beans of the home garden include snap or green beans, wax beans, French and Romano beans. Beans are generally classified by their use at various growth stages. People eat snap beans at an immature stage, pods and all. Green shell beans, such as the lima, are grown only for their immature seeds. Various varieties may grow as a low bush (determinant) or as a vine that requires support (indeterminant). The latter are commonly

called pole beans. Pole beans require a support structure but produce beans over a longer period than bush beans. Edamame is a type of soybean that is harvested green. Fava beans, like Windsor, are more cold-tolerant than other types and can be planted earlier (April).

Preparation and planting

Avoid planting where other legumes have been in the past three years to avoid root rots. Seeds can be planted as soon as the danger of frost has past. Plant bush types at two-week intervals to help guarantee a harvest throughout the season. Beans require little nitrogen and excessive N can cause excessive vegetative growth.

Care

Beans have shallow root structures so irrigation is important, especially during pod development.

Major pests

Insects: Mexican bean beetle, leafhoppers, aphids, European corn borer.

Diseases: Bacterial blight, anthracnose, rust, gray mold, white mold and bean mosaic virus.

Harvesting and storage

Harvest snap beans as soon as the pods are large enough to make picking worthwhile (usually two weeks from full bloom). Pick before the pods are completely filled out. Regularly harvest the young pods on pole beans to keep them producing. Beans can be stored for 7 to 10 days; do not store at temperatures below 41°F or chilling injury will occur.

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