

# How to Grow Beans



## Preparation

Soil - add 3" of compost to bed, work in gently with garden fork

Trellis - add 6 to 10' trellis to support pole beans before planting

## Planting

When to plant - May through June, when soil temperature is above 60 deg

Spacing and Depth - Plant seed 1 inch deep, in hills of four to six seeds at the base of each pole for teepee. Plant 3 inches apart in rows along the base of linear trellises. Thin to 6 inches apart once established. Rows are 18"-24" or greater.

For Sharing Saved Seed, plant only one variety of bean or keep a definite boundary such as a fence, ditch, roadway, levee, or barren strip at least ten (10) feet wide.

## Care- Water

Adequate moisture is especially important from flower bud formation to pod set. Provide bean plants with 1 inch of water per week. Water early in the morning to allow plants to dry quickly and reduce opportunity for disease infection.

Mulch after second set of true leaves develops to help retain moisture and reduce weeds.

Apply mulch 2 - 3 inches deep after soil has warmed.

## Weeds

Weed control is essential especially in the first six weeks after planting. Because beans are shallowly rooted, shallow cultivation and hand-pulling are the preferred methods to prevent root damage.

## Feeding

Pole beans produce over such a long period that they will benefit from a feeding or a side dressing of compost or manure about half way through their growing season.

Inoculating seed with rhizobium bacteria may increase yields, especially in soils where beans have not been grown before, but not necessary for production.

## Harvesting

Harvest green beans when the pods are firm, crisp and fully elongated, but before the seed within the pod has developed significantly. Pods break easily with a "snap" when ready. To harvest beans, break off the stem above the cap. Use two hands or scissors, in order not to break the vine. Quality is best if beans are harvested in early morning hours. Regular harvesting of green beans will prolong flowering and increase yields.

Beans are best when used as soon as possible after harvest, but they can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days if cooled immediately. This applies to freezing and canning as well. For best quality, canning and freezing should be done within a few hours after picking. Do not wash them before storing. Wet beans will develop black spots and decay quickly. Wash beans just before preparation.

For dry beans to eat or save, leave the pods on the plants until they are brown and the seeds rattle inside them. Seeds should be so hard you can barely dent them with your teeth. If the pods have yellowed and a rainy spell is forecast, cut the plants off near the ground and hang them upside down indoors to dry.

Put the shelled beans in airtight, lidded containers. Store the beans in a cool, dry place.