

Beans, Snap and Pole

Phaseolus vulgaris

Beans, also known as snap beans, green beans, and string beans, come in two forms: bush and vine. Some gardeners favor vine, or pole beans, because they produce a steady crop over a long period of time, and can be harvested without bending over. Others prefer sowing successive rows of bush beans, which don't require trellising and generate the majority of their crop all at once—perfect for canning or freezing.

TIP – Erect trellises or teepees for pole beans BEFORE sowing seeds.

Location and soil Grow beans in full sun, in well-drained soil.

When to Plant Sow bean seeds in spring after the danger of frost has passed when soil has warmed to 60°F. Pole beans can be planted just once, although some gardeners like to sow a second round after 4 weeks. For a prolonged harvest of bush beans, plant a short row every 2 to 3 weeks, ending about 2 months before the first expected frost.

Trellising Trellis options include teepees (easily made by lashing together 3 or more 6- to 8-ft bamboo poles), netting material stretched between fence posts, sturdy twine suspended from a horizontal support, or anything that allows the vines to climb vertically.

Seed depth and Spacing *Bush Beans:* Plant seeds 1 inch deep and 2 to 4 inches apart in rows that are about 2 feet apart. *Pole Beans:* Plant seeds 1 inch deep and 4 to 6 inches apart in rows that are 3 to 4 feet apart. *When planting a pole variety at the base of a teepee* space 6 seeds evenly around each pole so that they are 6 inches apart.

Germination Sprouts should appear in 1 to 2 weeks. Optimum soil temperature for germination is 70° to 75°F.

Thinning *Bush Beans:* When the first true leaves appear thin seedlings to stand 4 to 6 inches apart.

Pole Beans: Thin pole bean seedlings to stand 6 to 9 inches apart, or, if growing them up a teepee, thin to 3 to 4 seedlings around each pole.

Care Mulch with straw or grass clippings after thinning to conserve soil moisture and prevent weeds.

Fertilize Beans, like other legumes, produce nitrogen-fixing nodules on their roots, which minimizes the need for supplemental fertilizers. Add compost to the soil at the time of sowing; a side-dressing of slow-release organic fertilizer when plants are 6 inches tall is optional.

Harvest Pick beans when they are young and tender, before the pods start to bulge. Frequent harvesting stimulates continuous pod production.

Nutrition Beans are a good source of Vitamins A, C, K, and Folate, and also provide essential minerals, including Iron and Potassium.

| | Blue Lake (bush) | Greencrop (bush) AAS Winner, 1957 | Roma II (bush) | Romano (pole) |
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| Description | Dependable and delicious. Heavy yields of 6-inch beans. | Long time favorite. Highly productive plants produce 8-inch flat pods. | Upright plants produce Italian-type beans that are flat, long, and stringless. | Classic Italian-type bean. 6-ft vines produce 6-inch, wide-podded beans with a distinct flavor. |
| Comments | Virus resistant. | Virus resistant. | Good disease resistance. | Continuous harvest. |
| Days to harvest | 50-65 | 45-55 | 55-70 | 60-70 |