



GEORGINA



RECREATION AT HOME

Planting, Growing and Harvesting Green Beans

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Green beans are a staple of every vegetable garden because they are so easy to grow—even in limited space—and incredibly productive! Here's how to plant, grow, and harvest green beans—both the pole and bush types.

All green beans (also called “string beans” or “snap beans”) are tender annuals. Though most green beans are indeed green, they also come in purple, red, yellow, and streaked varieties.

What is the difference between bush beans and pole beans?

The main difference between the many types of green beans is whether their growing style is classified as “bush” or “pole.”

Bush beans grow compactly (reaching about two-feet tall) and do not require extra support from a structure like a trellis.

Pole beans grow as climbing vines that may reach 10 to 15 feet tall. Therefore, pole beans require a trellis or staking.

There are upsides and downsides to both types, of course:

Bush beans generally require less maintenance and are easier to grow, but pole beans typically yield more beans and are mostly disease-resistant.

Bush beans produce in about 50 to 55 days; pole beans will take 55 to 65 days.

Bush beans often come in all at once, so stagger your planting every two weeks. Pole beans need their vines to grow and will produce for a month or two if you keep harvesting.

When to plant beans?

Seeds are best sown outdoors any time after the last spring frost date, when soils have warmed to at least 48°F (9°C). Don't plant too early, as cold, moist soil will delay germination and could cause the seeds to rot.

Tip: To get a head start on planting, use black plastic or landscaping fabric to warm the soil.

Do not start green bean seeds indoors. Due to their fragile roots, they may not survive transplanting.

Choosing and Preparing a Planting Site

Beans are best grown in well-draining soil with normal fertility. Beans don't need supplemental fertilizer as they fix their own nitrogen. However, poor soil should still be amended with aged manure or compost in the fall prior to planting.

Beans prefer a slightly acidic to neutral soil pH (6.0–7.0).

Set up any supports for pole beans prior to planting.



How to Plant Beans

Sow bush bean seeds 1 inch deep and 2 inches apart in rows 18 inches apart. Plant a little deeper in sandy soils (but not too deep).

For pole beans, set up trellises or tepees prior to planting so that the plants' fragile roots are not disturbed. Plant pole bean seeds about 1 inch deep and 3 inches apart.

Plant around a tepee: Tie 3 to 4 (or more) 7-foot-long bamboo poles or long, straight branches together at the top and splay the legs in a circle. Then plant 3 or 4 seeds around each pole. As vines appear, train them to wind up the poles. For more stability, wrap string/wire around the poles about halfway up, encircling the tepee; this gives the vines something to grab.

Tip: If you like pole beans, another easy support for them is a "cattle panel"—a portable section of wire fence—16 feet long and 5 feet tall. The beans will climb with ease and you won't have to get into contorted positions to pick them.

For a harvest that lasts all summer, sow bean seeds every 2 weeks. If you're going to be away and unable to harvest, skip a planting. Beans do not wait for anyone!

Practice crop rotation to avoid the build up of pests and diseases.

How to Grow Green Beans

Mulch soil around bean plants to retain moisture; make sure that it is well-drained. Beans have shallow roots so mulch keeps them cool.

Water regularly, about 2 inches per week. If you do not keep beans well watered, they will stop flowering. Water on sunny days so that foliage will not remain soaked, which could encourage disease.

If necessary, begin fertilizing after heavy bloom and the set of pods. Avoid using high-nitrogen fertilizer or you will get lush foliage and few beans. A side dressing of compost or composted manure halfway through the growing season is a good alternative to liquid fertilizer.

Weed diligently but carefully to prevent disturbing the shallow root systems of the beans.

Pinch off the tops of pole bean vines when they reach the top of the support. This will force them to put energy into producing more pods instead.

In high heat, use row covers over young plants; hot weather can cause blossoms to drop from plants, reducing harvest.

How to Harvest Green Beans

Harvest beans in the morning when their sugar level is highest.

Green beans are picked young and tender before the seeds inside have fully developed.

Pick green beans every day; the more you pick, the more beans grow.

Look for firm, sizable that are firm and can be snapped—generally as thick as a pencil.

Snap or cut the beans off the plant, being careful not to tear the plant. Fresh beans should snap easily when broken.

Once you see the seeds inside bulging, green beans are past their peak and will taste tough.

How to Store Green Beans

Store beans in a moisture-proof, airtight container in the refrigerator. Beans will toughen over time even when stored properly.

Beans can be kept fresh for about four days or blanched and frozen immediately after harvesting.

Beans can also be canned or pickled.