

Beans

Beans, one of the most popular vegetables, take very little space, have few problems, and produce bountiful crops.

Varieties

Grow both bush and vining varieties. The bush varieties mature rapidly and are easy to grow in successive plantings. The vining varieties take longer to mature but are prolific. Beans are eaten in three ways: pod and all (snap beans), as immature seeds (limas), and as mature dry beans (shelled and stored for later use). You can use some varieties in all three ways. .

Planting

Plant beans in a sunny, well- drained location after the soil has thoroughly warmed. Bean seeds rot in cool, damp soil. Make successive sowings of bush beans every two weeks for an extended harvest. Plant pole, lima, and dry beans only once. Space rows of bush beans 2 to 2½ feet apart, with seeds placed 2 to 3 inches apart. Plant pole beans in hills 2 to 3 feet apart, with four or five seeds per pole. After the beans have sprouted, thin to three plants per pole. Lima beans need a little more space, with seeds spaced every 8 inches in rows 2 to 2½ feet apart.

Care

Side-dress beans with fertilizer when plants are 4 to 6 inches high. Use mulch to keep soil constantly moist. Weed regularly, but to avoid spreading viruses, work in the bean patch only when it's dry.

Harvest

Because bean plants will stop producing if the pods develop seeds, pick all snap and lima beans before they mature. The beans should be tender, and the seeds should not have swelled enough to cause visible bulges in the shells. Pinch limas when small and tender. Allow dry beans to mature on the bush. Dry them well, then harvest by beating them against

a hard object, such as the side of a garbage can. Store in an airtight glass jar.