

How to Grow Beans dry

General

Dry beans are an ecologically sound foodstuff in today's world. Being a bean, they produce at least part of their own nitrogen supply with the help of symbiotic bacteria, which live in the soil. Dry beans are one of the easiest crops to produce organically. Dry beans are excellent protein sources when combined with whole grains, nuts or small amounts of meat or fish. Dried beans also contain fiber and minerals (remember to discard the soaking and cooking water to decrease flatulence).

Latin

Phaseolus vulgaris
Family: Fabaceae

Difficulty

Easy

We Recommend: Borlotto- For flavour and vigour, few dried beans beat this very tall Italian heirloom variety.

Season & Zone

Season: Warm season.

Exposure: Full-sun.

Zone: All zones.

Timing

Sow as early as possible for beans, around mid-May, so plants can mature before wet weather sets in. Optimal soil temperature: 21-32°C (70-90°F).

Starting

Sow seeds 2-5cm (1-2") deep, 5-8cm (2-3") apart, in rows 45-60cm (18-24") apart. Thin to at least 15cm (6") apart in each row. Using bean or combination inoculants on seeds helps growth. If the weather is too wet, beans can also be started in pots indoors and set out carefully a few weeks later. Seeds will sprout in 8-16 days, depending on conditions.

Growing

Ideal pH: 6.0-6.5. Well drained, warm soil in full sun is best. Raised beds help with both drainage and warmth. Use 1 cup of complete organic fertilizer for every 10' of row. Too much nitrogen fertilizer is often the cause of poor pod set and delayed maturity. If beans flower but do not set pods, the cause can be zinc deficiency. Try spraying the plants with kelp based fertilizer. Wet leaves on crowded plants are subject to diseases. Thin plants to increase air circulation and avoid touching the leaves while they are wet.

Harvest

Stop all watering when the first pods start drying out. Harvest when the seedpods are straw coloured. Pull the plants up by the roots and hang to dry. To shell the beans bash them back and forth inside a bag or pillowcase. Or shell them individually by hand. Do not pick until pods are dry. The beans themselves can then be set somewhere out of direct sunlight, where air movement is good, for a further week to insure even dryness.

Diseases & Pests

Cutworms and root maggots can attack seeds and seedlings. Allowing for good air circulation between plants, and taking care not to over fertilize can slow foliar disease, both fungal and bacterial. When thinning your seedlings try to keep enough space in between for air circulation to reduce disease incidence.

Companion Planting

Beans fix nitrogen in the soil. Plant with Brassicas, carrots, celery, chard, corn, cucumber, eggplant, peas, potatoes, radish, and strawberries. Avoid planting near chives, garlic, leeks, and onions. Pole beans and beets stunt each other's growth.

