



## Green Beans – String ‘em Along

Green beans are nutritious, easy to grow and a good choice for first-time gardeners.

- Varieties are grown either as a bush or pole (vines).
- Days to harvest range from 50 to 80 days depending on type of variety.
- They can be grown in containers but lack of space may reduce harvest.

### Plant site:

- Seeds or starts can be planted outside when the soil reaches 65 degrees.
- Select beans with the shortest growing season.
- Grow beans in fertile, well-drained soils with high levels of organic matter and minimum of 6 hours, full sun exposure.

### Pole Beans:

- Pole beans need ample support of a trellis or pole system.
- Plant 6 to 8 seeds around the base of the pole or space 1 inch apart along the trellis.
- Sow seeds one inch deep with rows 3 feet apart.

### Bush Beans:

- Sow seeds about one inch deep and two inches apart in rows 18 to 24 inches apart.
- Support for bush beans is not needed.

### Planting, Water & Maintenance Needs:

- Start seeds indoors ten days to two weeks prior to planting outside.
  - Transplant seedlings into the garden in late spring.
- They can be directly sown into the garden late in the spring.
- Beans have moderate water needs in the beginning of growth.
- Water will possibly need to be increased during the heat of summer.
- Water bean plants at the roots to prevent fungus growth.
- Moisture levels near the root zone/area of the plant should be moist and pliable, not dry and crumbly, or wet/dripping.
- Sign of low soil nutrition are stunted plants with pale leaves or plants that fail to bloom or set fruit.

### Pollination/Flowering:

- Bean flowers are self-pollinating (both male and female parts are on the same plant).
- Bean flowers depend on bees and insects to transfer the pollen.
- Best to avoid pesticide use during flower bloom to encourage bee and insect visitation.

### Common Problems:

Powdery Mildew: A fungal disease that attacks the leaves, pods, and stems, with white mats of powdery fungal growth. Actions include

- Use raised beds or add organic matter to soil to help improve drainage.
- Do not overwater, especially in heavy soils.
- Remove and discard diseased plants (do not compost).

Slugs – Common garden pests in Washington. Plants show older leaves chewed & younger ones totally consumed. Action:

- Handpick and kill slugs when noticed (usually feed at night).
- Trap slugs with containers of stale beer sunk into the ground.

- Use chemical baits with caution as pets can be poisoned. Iron phosphate-based baits are safer for pets. Read the label for correct usage and dosage.

Bean Aphids: Small pear-shaped, dark green to black insects that feed on the shoot tips & leaves.

- Wash aphids from plants with a strong stream of water
- Provide proper nutrition to the plants. Switch to a slow release or low-nitrogen fertilizer as high levels of nitrogen encourages aphid reproduction.

#### **Harvesting:**

- Harvest green beans before they start to bulge.
- If picked when bulging, use the shelled beans. They are starchier but can be used for cooking.
- Harvest by removing pods from the bean vines one-quarter inch above the fruit.
- Frequent picking of green beans is essential for good growth and optimum quality.
- Beans can be preserved for later use by freezing, drying, or canning.

#### **Resources:**

*Growing Green Beans in Home Gardens.* Washington State University Publication:

<https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/vegetables-growing-green-beans-in-home-gardens-home-garden-series>

*Home Vegetable Gardening in Washington.* Washington State University Publication:

<https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/home-vegetable-gardening-in-washington-home-garden-series>

*Container Vegetable Gardening:* WSU – Pierce County Extension Fact sheet:

[https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2088/2017/04/Container-Vegetable-Gardening\\_RS004-2010.pdf](https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2088/2017/04/Container-Vegetable-Gardening_RS004-2010.pdf)

*Growing the Legume Family:* WSU – Snohomish County Extension Growing Groceries Program:

<https://extension.wsu.edu/snohomish/legumes/>

WSU Hortsense Fact Sheets for pest issues:

<http://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/Search/SeachByPlantCategory.aspx>

#### **Recommended green bean varieties for our area:**

- **Bush Soleil** 60 days, a yellow French/filet. Good producer, great flavor. Harvest young.
- **Nickel** 53 days, green French/Filet bean, good disease resistance, and tolerance to both cool and hot weather. Good tasting.
- **Provider** 55 days, snap green bean, early, productive, and tolerant of cooler soils.
- **Purple Queen or Royal Burgundy** 60 days, Easy to see, Easy to Pick - Beautiful purple beans, turn green when cooked
- **Dragon Tongue** 60 days. Somewhat flat, buff yellow bean with purple stripes. Easy to see when ready to pick. Can be used as a fresh snap bean, cooked or canned, or allowed to fully mature for dry beans.
- **Pole Monte Cristo, Fortex, Blue Lake Pole, Kentucky Blue, Kentucky Wonder:** all good snap green bean varieties for fresh eating and canning.
- **Rattlesnake** 75-80 days. Easy to see, Easy to Pick. Good as fresh snap bean but if left on the vine to mature they can be harvested as dry beans.
- **Musica** 67 days. Musica remains very tender and delicious even when it reaches its largest size. White seeds.
- **Cobra** 58-60 days pod 7-9", Fantastic flavor, the pods are large, light green, round, and stringless. Fast maturing: If you plant them at the same time as Blue Lake Pole, you will get a nice crop a week or more earlier. Vigorous but not too vegetative, allowing for good air flow.
- **Scarlett Runner beans** Very attractive, productive vines. Hummingbirds love the flowers, several colors available. Can grow in slightly shaded areas. Pods are a little fuzzy and flattened, but good

*Prepared by WSU – Snohomish County Extension Master Gardeners  
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