

Beans (Bush and Pole)



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space bush beans 2 to 4 inches apart and pole beans 6 to 8 inches apart within rows. Or plant 3 to 4 plants per 2.5-gallon container. Plant April through July after any danger of frost has passed.

Soil: Amend with organic matter to create well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If a soil test shows that pH is below 6.2, apply lime in early spring and as recommended.

For proper drainage in a container garden, use potting mix and ensure that containers have drainage holes. You could also use self-watering containers.

Water: Keep soil consistently moist, but not saturated. Apply roughly 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Avoid wetting leaves to prevent fungal disease. Mulch helps retain moisture.

Plant: Direct sow seeds about 1 inch deep. When sprouts are 2 to 3 inches tall, thin bush bean plants 2 to 3 inches apart and pole beans 4 to 6 inches apart. Beans will not produce if overcrowded. Transplants are not recommended.

Fertilize: If you don't have a soil test, apply all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting and according to label directions. Reapply beside plants, 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress) at 3- to 4-leaf stage, before first bloom.

Insects/Diseases/Weeds: Scout plants frequently for insect and disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, also known as “worms”). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

Harvest: Harvest at 55 to 65 days for bush beans and 70 to 80 days for pole beans. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

Other: Bush beans are self-standing and grow only a couple of feet high, so no trellis is required. However, pole beans grow much larger and require support. Succession planting every 2 to 3 weeks will produce a larger harvest from both plant types.

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