



# Easy Gardening

**BEANS • GREEN BEANS • GREEN BEANS • GREENBE**

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**G**reen beans are a popular, warm-season, vegetable crop for home gardens. They grow well in most Texas soils. Like most vegetables, green beans grow best in well-drained soil and with plenty of sunlight.

## Varieties

Several bean varieties are recommended for planting in Texas:

### Snap beans

- Blue Lake
- Derby
- Early Contender
- Goldencrop Wax
- Greencrop
- Kentucky Wonder
- Tendercrop
- Tendergreen
- Topcrop

### Pinto beans

- Dwarf Horticultural
- Luna
- UI-114

### Lima beans

- Florida Butter
- Florida Speckled
- Fordhook
- Henderson Bush
- Jackson Wonder

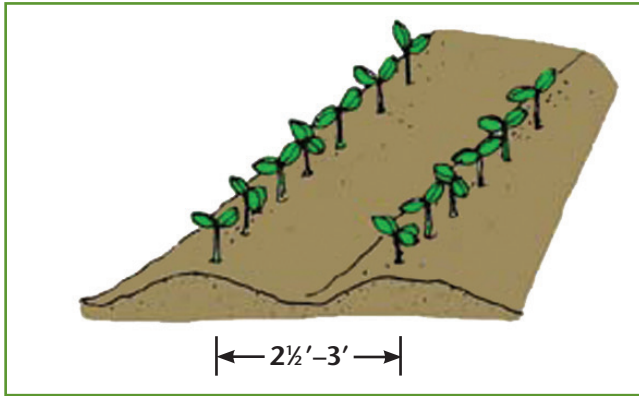
## Soil preparation

Before planting green beans, remove all weeds and trash from the planting area. Then till the soil 8 to 10 inches deep and rake it several times to break up the large clods. It is best to work the garden soil only when it is dry enough to not stick to garden tools.

## Planting

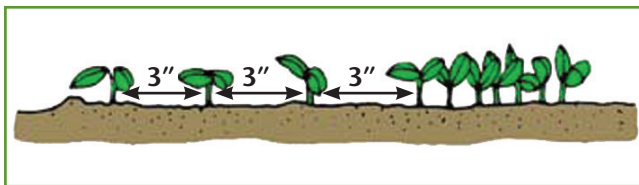
In the spring, plant green beans only after all danger of frost has passed. In the fall, plant them 10 to 12 weeks before the first expected frost. Use  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of seed for each 100 feet of row of green beans. If possible, use fungicide-treated seeds to protect the seedlings from diseases until they are up and growing. Do not eat treated seeds.

For bush beans, plant the seeds about 1 inch deep and 1 to 2 inches apart in the row (Fig. 1). The rows should be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3



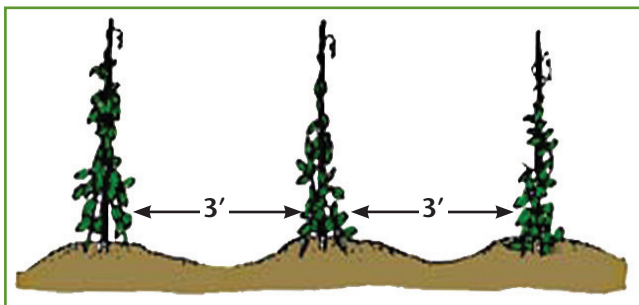
**Figure 1.** Plant bush beans on rows that are 2½ to 3 feet apart.

feet apart. After the beans have sprouted, thin the plants to 3 to 4 inches apart (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** After the bush beans are up, thin them to 3 to 4 inches between plants.

For pole beans, plant the seed in rows 3 to 4 feet apart. Plant them in hills about 3 feet apart in the row (Fig. 3). Place a 6- to 8-foot stake in the center of each hill. Plant three to four seeds around the stake, about 1 inch deep in the soil. As the bean vines mature, they will grow up the stake.



**Figure 3.** Plant pole beans in hills about 3 feet apart. Place a 6- to 8-foot single pole or stake in the middle of each hill.

Try to plant when the soil is moist enough to cause the seeds to germinate and emerge quickly.

## Fertilizing

Beans grow best when the soil is fertilized well. For an area that is 10 feet long and 10 feet wide, use 2 to 3 pounds of fertilizer such as 10-20-10. Spread the fertilizer evenly over the area then mix it in with the top 3 to 4 inches of soil.

## Watering


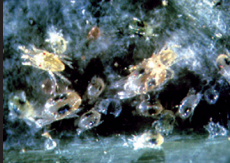
Water the plants about once a week in dry weather. Do not let the soil dry out while the beans are blooming or the blooms will drop and yields will be decreased.

## Care during the season

The roots of beans grow near the soil surface. When hoeing and pulling weeds, do not dig too deep, or the plant's roots will be damaged. After the plants begin to flower and set beans, apply ½ cup of fertilizer for every 10 feet of row. Scatter the fertilizer between the rows. This will help the plants produce more beans. Water the plants after fertilizing.

## Insects

Many insecticides are available at garden centers for homeowner use. Sevin® is a synthetic insecticide; Bt-based insecticides and sulfur are organic options. Sulfur also has fungicidal properties and helps in controlling many diseases. Before using a pesticide, read the label and always follow cautions, warnings and directions.

Name and description		Control
 <p>Aphid</p>	<p>1/8 inch long; green, pink, red, or brown; feeds on underside of leaf or on leaf petioles; sucks plant juices</p>	<p>Check with your county Extension agent</p>
 <p>Spider mites</p>	<p>Spiderlike; barely visible to the naked eye; feed on underside of leaf causing yellow spots on the top of it; may form tiny webs</p>	<p>Check with your county Extension agent</p>

## Diseases

Diseases may be a problem during cool, wet weather. If spots appear on leaves or bean pods, treat the plant with an approved fungicide. Neem oil, sulfur, and other fungicides can be used.

Before using a pesticide, read the label. Again, always follow cautions, warnings, and directions.

## Harvesting

Green beans are ready to pick when they are about the size of a small pencil. Pull them carefully to avoid damaging the plant. Overmature beans are tough and stringy.

If beans are picked when they are ready, the plants will continue producing for several weeks.

## Storing

You can store fresh beans in the crisper, in plastic bags or in other containers in the refrigerator. They usually can be stored in the refrigerator for a week.

## Serving

Fresh green beans add color and variety to meals. Green beans

are a fair source of vitamins A and C if they are cooked for a short period in a very small amount of boiling water. Cook them just until they are tender.



**Fresh steamed green beans is an easy dish to prepare.**

Do not cook them too long or they will become mushy and lose their bright green color.

### Acknowledgments

This publication was revised from earlier versions written by Jerry Parsons, former Professor and Extension Horticulturist, and Sam Cotner, Professor Emeritus and former Extension Horticulturist.

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