

Beans: Cultural Practices

Soil: best in well drained soil high in organic matter, but will grow in any soil type. Best in soil with pH of 6.5

Sun/Shade: almost all need full sun.

Exceptions: Withner White Cornfield Bean is shade tolerant, a pole bean bred to grow on corn. Blackcoat is a Runner bean that is also shade tolerant.

Fertilization: If deficient, add phosphorus and potassium, but not nitrogen, because that could cause interference in the bean's relationship with symbiotic bacteria that supply them with nitrogen. Most soils already have wild bacteria, but if your bean roots do not develop nitrogen nodules, you could purchase species-specific inoculants and apply to next season's seed.

Note: legumes don't contribute nitrogen to other plants they are grown with. They only contribute nitrogen when they decompose. But they won't compete with other plants for nitrogen.

Inoculants: best for cowpeas (black-eyed peas), soy beans, and fava beans. They are species specific, so read labels. Not typically used with common (green and dry) type beans.

Method: dampen beans (or use soaked beans) in a container, add powdered inoculant, stir to coat, then plant seeds. Or save soil from around plants that were well nodulated, and scatter soil around next year's plantings. Once in the soil, you probably don't need to add inoculants again.

Planting time:

Cool season beans:

Fava beans, *Vicia faba*: plant Sept. - Nov., or Feb. - March.

Garbanzo beans, *Cicer arietinum*: Feb. - March.

Lentils, *Lens culinaris*: (no specific info found, other than cool season)

Warm Season beans:

Common horticultural beans, *Phaseolus vulgaris*: plant after all risk of frost: late April, early May.

Bush beans can be planted until mid July.

Pole beans through mid June.

Cowpeas, *Vigna unguiculata*: need 100 days and warmth, perhaps start indoors.

Runner Beans, *Phaseolus coccineus* (perennial): Conflicting info, whether to plant earlier or later than common beans.

Soy Beans, *Glycine max*: need warm soil, late May, early June

Tepary beans, *Phaseolus acutifolius*: no specific info found

Lima beans, *Phaseolus lunatus*: our climate is not warm enough.