

**Vegetable of the Week –
Bush Beans, *Phaseoleus vulgaris* by Vicki Roberts**

Common names: Snap beans, String beans, Haricot, Green beans, French bean, Wax bean
Family: Fabaceae

In my estimation the summer garden would not be complete without bush beans. They are easy to grow from seed when temperatures are consistently 70-80 degrees. They germinate in about a week and many varieties are ready for harvest in about 6-8 weeks and plants will continue to produce with regular picking. Due to the short growing time required for harvest, succession plantings of multiple small rows or areas every 2 weeks until late July will extend and increase the delicious pods that can be utilized as snap beans, shell beans, or dry beans. The seeds are edible when immature in the pod, or until they dry on the plant and can be harvested as seed for the following year plantings. Seeds stored properly can be viable for up to 5 years.



Photos by Vicki Roberts

To grow bush beans the plant requires 6-8 hours of sun per day and soil with a pH of 6.0-6.8. With consistent moisture of at least 1 inch of water per week, the bean plant will reach 1-2 feet in both height and width. Supplemental watering, if necessary, is best provided to the roots by drip irrigation, as water to the leaves encourages disease. The use of mulch around the base of the plant retains moisture in the soil and suppresses weeds which decreases additional water requirements.

Bush beans are available in many different varieties which include different colors, shapes, and disease resistance. The green varieties that grow well here are: Blue Lake, Contender, Provider, Jade, Bronco and Roma II which is an Italian flat pod. The yellow or wax varieties are: Golden Butterwax, Golden Rod, and Gold Rush. The purple varieties are visually striking when mixed with the green and yellow pods but they turn green when cooked. Purple varieties are: Royalty Purple, Royal Burgundy and Purple Queen.



The best part of growing bush beans is discovering the many ways you can prepare them. They can be eaten raw as part of a vegetable tray with dip, or steamed, roasted, grilled, pickled, sautéed, frozen, dehydrated, canned, and baked. They are low in calories, fat, and cholesterol and a good source of fiber. This is one of my favorite recipes:

<https://www.healthyseasonalrecipes.com/simple-skillet-green-beans/>

I hope you will try it.

References:

Cornell University, Growing Guide.

www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scenef57c.html

Westerfield, Robert, University of Georgia Extension, Home Garden Green Beans, Circular 1006,

secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201006_2.PDF

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