

DRY BEAN VARIETIES FOR LANE COUNTY

The bean is a versatile vegetable that can be easily grown by the home gardener. It is used as "snapped," "green-shelled," or when mature, "dried." Up until recently, dried bean production has not been a serious consideration for most home gardeners. Many home gardeners are now growing larger quantities of beans for drying as food prices continue to increase.

SNAP BEANS: numerous varieties of beans are used in the green (immature) stage of growth. The snap bean varieties usually have fleshier walls and contain less fiber in the younger stages of growth. The seeds are usually quite small. Examples of green, snap and bush beans are Blue Lake and Kentucky Wonder. Pole beans used are Oregon Giant and Romano. Tenderpod, Tendercrop, and Tendergreen are examples of bush beans. Puregold, Goldcrop, and Majestic are wax bean varieties.

SHELL OR HORTICULTURE BEANS: The lima bean is often used at the immature, green stage, but the beans are mature horticulturally. Examples of these beans, which can be shelled as they fill the pod are Scarlet Runner, and French - Taylor - Bush Horticulture beans. Beans which are used at the earlier stage as a snap bean can later be shelled. Almost any of the dried beans can be shelled in their middle growth stages. Shelled beans may be eaten fresh, canned, or frozen. Since there are many different varieties of beans, the textures and flavors vary. Choose the varieties that appeal to the family the most. Try these different varieties each spring.

DRY BEANS: Pinto, Red Kidney, Great Northern, Romano, Scarlet Runner, Tendergreen, Oregon Trail, and other multiple use beans can be eaten after the seeds are dried. All of the above mentioned beans can be dried for later usage.

Since there are so many different varieties of beans, the texture and flavor vary. Grow a small section of the different varieties that the family is interested in, then make a recipe with them to test their flavor. If the taste and flavor are satisfactory, larger quantities can be grown. This prevents the growing and shelling of large quantities of unsatisfactory flavored beans.

Beans to be grown for snapping, shelling, or drying should be planted early in the season to mature under Lane County conditions. If the pods remain intact, they can be left on the vine until all the pods are completely dry. Test a couple of pods to make sure that they are completely dry. If the beans tend to open as they dry, they should be picked to prevent the bean loss. The dried bean pods can be placed in a burlap sack and stored in a warm, dry place until they are ready for threshing.

To separate the bean from the pods, crumple the pods by hand or grind the beans together in the burlap bag or roll on the floor. The dried chaff can be screened or separated by blowing in the wind or by a fan.. The beans should then be dried more completely in a warm, dry place

Beans grown in Lane County commonly become infested with bean weevil at the time of maturity. Several methods can be used to prevent the weevils. Insecticides can be used as the pods mature. Another way to insure a weevil-free bean is to place the dried beans in a freezer at 0-degree F or lower for 30 to 36 hours. If freezing is not feasible, place the beans in an oven for 15 minutes at 180 degree F, turn off the heat and leave in the oven for 1 hour or longer. Beans should then be stored in a tight, closed container to prevent additional infestation. The freezer treatment will not kill the beans and they can be used the following year for seed. The heat-treated beans may not grow. Beans will not cross with other beans.

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