

Growing Mungbeans - Getting the Quality Right

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INTRODUCTION

Quality is of prime importance if Australia is to maintain and expand its overseas markets for mung bean. The Northern Territory (NT) can produce the high quality mung beans demanded by overseas markets. However, rain at harvest can lower quality and, although the variety Putland, which was developed in the NT has greater tolerance to rain, it is important to maximise chances of producing high quality seed.

WHAT IS GOOD QUALITY MUNGBEAN?

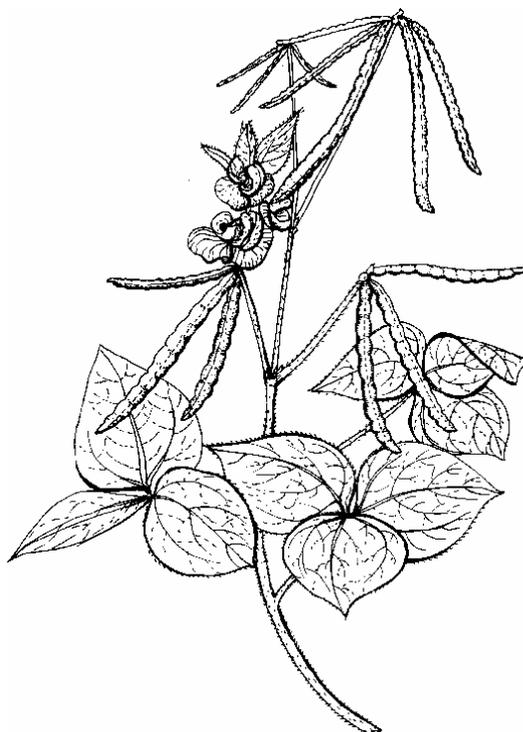
For the variety Putland, a good indicator of quality is the percentage of seed that has a bright shiny green appearance. If more than 90% of seed meets this criterion, then it is very likely that the quality will be acceptable to international buyers.

It is possible to assess seed quality in a standing crop. Simply break open all the ripe pods (black) on five representative plants and calculate the percentage of seeds that have a bright shiny green appearance. It is also possible to assess quality by sampling seed from the harvester bin.

DESICCATION WILL PERMIT PROMPT HARVEST

If the crop is nearly ready for harvest and heavy rain, such as a cyclonic depression, is threatening, it is possible to desiccate the plant and speed the onset of harvest by applying 2 litres per hectare of Diquat®. When the pods formed from the first flowering are ripe, early harvest can commence.

Manual desiccation is economical only if yield and quality are good. It is therefore important to estimate the value of the crop prior to making a decision to desiccate. If seed quality is good, a yield of at least 1 tonne/ha will justify the cost of desiccation. As a rough guide, if the variety is Putland, and there are 20 plants per square metre, then to yield at least 1 tonne/ha each plant will need to have at least 15 ripe pods.



BEWARE OF INSECT PESTS

Prior to flowering not much effort is required to grow mungbeans. However, between flowering and harvest much diligence is required. Insect pests are the major threat to yield and quality during this period and regular inspection of the crop is recommended.

During flowering, the bean pod borer (*Maruca* sp.) will remove flowers. It can also leave holes in pods and make mature seed more susceptible to rain damage around harvest time. Thiodan® (endosulphan), at 2 L/ha is recommended for control.

During pod fill a number of sucking insect species can reduce seed quality without affecting yield. Thiodan® can also be used for their control.

For further information contact the DPIFM Offices in Katherine or Darwin.

Please visit us at our website:

www.nt.gov.au/dpifm

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