

French Beans

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VARIETIES

Climbing: *Phaseolus vulgaris*
Bush/dwarf: *P. vulgaris* var. *humilis*

PLANTING

Planting takes place between April and August. Sow the seed directly into the garden. Do not plant deeper than 2 cm as poor germination results. Dwarf varieties are planted 25 cm apart in rows 30 cm apart. Staking of climbing varieties is done as soon as germination is noticed. This is to prevent root damage which would occur if left till the plant is bigger. As the plants grow, soil is hilled up around the stems, which helps support the plant as well as smother weeds. After the final hilling the soil should be about 5-7.5 cm up the stem.

FERTILISER

It is good practice to lime the soil using dolomite (100-200 g/m²) a couple of weeks before planting and work into the top 75 mm of soil. It is not recommended to plant in soil which has recently had organic matter added to it as this can encourage fungal root rots. A complete fertiliser high in phosphorus should be worked into the rows at the rate of 70 g/m² about a week before planting.

A side dressing of 30 g/m² of a complete fertiliser mix at two to three weeks after germination is recommended. This should be applied just before hilling up, so that it is covered in the process.

HARVESTING

Dwarf varieties can be harvested within 45 days and may be continued for over a month. Climbing varieties take about 70 days to the first harvest. Beans should be picked when young, before seeds have developed in the pods. If left too long the pods become fibrous. Early picking also stimulates flowering, increasing yield.

INSECTS

Bean fly is present in the Top End and can be a serious pest when the plants are small. For control it is necessary to spray plants at emergence, three days later and every seven days thereafter until flowering commences.



For information on insect control, please refer to the DPIFM Entomology website at <http://pestinfo.nt.gov.au/>

Please visit us on our website at www.horticulture.nt.gov.au

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