Celebrate the Year of the Garden Bean!

There are many species of beans in cultivation around the world, yet it is the common green bean, Phaseolus vulgaris that takes on celebrity status as National Garden Bureau's vegetable focus for 2021.

One of the earliest cultivated plants, garden beans can trace their beginnings to Central and South America. Vining or climbing beans were an original member of the “Three-Sisters” – a companion planting of the first domesticated crops of maize, winter squash, and climbing beans. These became the three main agricultural crops used for trade and food for native North Americans.

Green beans were once referred to as string beans due to the long fibrous thread along the pod seams. The first stringless green bean was developed in 1894 by Calvin Keeney who later became known as the “Father of the stringless bean”. Breeders continue to breed this stringless trait into modern genetics. Other desirable traits include dark green succulent pods, good bean flavor, concentrated fruit set, stress tolerance, and disease resistance.
Basic Types of Garden Beans:
The common garden bean is anything but common! Green beans or ‘snap’ beans as they are also referred to come in a variety of flavors, pod shapes, sizes, and a colorful pallet including shades of green, purple, yellow, and speckled bicolors.

- **Bush beans** are the workhorse of the garden and the mainstay in the kitchen. Bush beans are compact and fit well into both small garden patches or patio containers fitted with cages.
- **Pole beans** with their vining habits and can be trained up poles, trellises, netting, or supportive structures such as a teepee. With proper support pole beans can also be grown in containers.
- **Filet beans** or Haricots Vert (French green beans) are distinguished by elegant ultra-slim pods. Due to their delicate appearance, Filet beans are gaining in popularity with foodies and chefs. Filet beans come in both bush and pole bean types.
- **Dried or shelling beans** are grown for their edible seeds rather than edible pods. Pinto beans, kidney beans, and black beans fall into this category.

Varieties to Try:

**Pole Beans**

- **Seychelles** - Seven to nine-foot vines produce multiple crops of 5-6” long stringless pods with excellent flavor. Fast-growing and early-to-produce crisp delicious pods.
- **Kentucky Blue** – Produces 6-8” dark green pods on six-foot vines with outstanding flavor. Can be harvested all season long.

**Bush Beans**

- **Mascotte** – A gourmet compact variety perfect for today’s small space gardens. Produces long slender pods that stay above the foliage for easy harvest.
- **Desperado** – Heat and stress tolerance makes this an easy to grow and high yielder of long straight 5” dark green pods.

**Specialty Beans**

- **Roma II** – A Romano or Italian flat bean that produces an abundance of wide, flat 5” long pods with a distinctive rich, intense, beany flavor. Bush type habit.
- **Amethyst Purple** – A French filet bush bean that produces beautiful violet-purple, long slender stringless pods on compact plants suitable for containers and raised beds.
- **Gold Rush** – The gold standard for yellow wax beans, Gold Rush produces clusters of straight 5-6” long yellow pods. Pods hold well on the bush and are versatile in the kitchen.

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Beans are warm-weather vegetables and are best planted after soil temperatures reach 70°F.

Avoid sowing too early in the season. Cool wet soils can lead to rot.

Beans thrive with at least eight hours of daily sun, moderate fertility, and well-drained soil.

Beans have shallow roots, weed carefully to prevent damage.

Mulch the soil around the bean plant; consistent moisture results in the highest quality harvests.

Quick to mature, harvests can begin 50-60 days after sowing.

Bush beans typically grow 12-24 inches tall and produce harvests for about 3 weeks.

Succession sowing of bush beans every 2-3 weeks will produce delicious beans all season.

Pole beans have a long harvest season, generally lasting 6-8 weeks.

Harvest frequently to encourage pod production.

Pole beans can quickly grow into a lush privacy wall.

Create a living Fort or Teepee with pole beans for a fun play space.

Yellow wax beans lack chlorophyll and will retain their beautiful golden color when cooked.

Purple beans contain anthocyanins (the purple pigment) that disappear when beans are cooked.

For Harvesting Tips, Where to Buy links and more, go to https://ngb.org/year-of-the-garden-bean/