



SEEDS

Socio-Economic & Environmental Development Solutions

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Beans and Pole Beans

Bush beans and pole beans are the same species and in some case, the same variety with different forms. They can easily be grown side by side if the requirements of each are met. Monocultures, large areas of the same plant, are sometimes not desirable but can be planted. Bush beans tend to produce fruit over a shorter period. Pole beans need something to climb on and produce over a longer season.

Monocultures

A large area of a single species of plant can be more susceptible to insects and diseases. Because similar plants are so close together, the problem or pest can easily travel from one plant to the next. On the other hand, it is easier to plant and harvest the beans if they are all in the same location. Beans need to be picked daily during their peak production season, and when they are planted together, the process will be faster.

Planting and Spacing

Bush beans can be planted 2 to 4 inches apart, either in an intensive planting or in rows 2 to 3 feet apart. New plantings can be made every two to three weeks for continuous harvest. Pole beans can be planted in hills around a tripod of support stakes or in rows next to a trellis.

They should be planted 6 to 10 inches apart. The support poles or trellis should be 6 to 7 feet tall. The seeds of both should be planted about 1 inch deep.

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Harvesting

Bush beans produce a large crop of beans over a period of about three weeks. This is good if you want to can or freeze the beans because they are available all at the same time. Pole beans produce fewer beans at once but continue producing over a long period. This is good if you want fresh beans for the table. Bush bean plants can be pulled after they have finished producing, but take care not to disturb the roots of pole beans if they are planted nearby.

Climate

Some pole beans, like scarlet runner beans, do better where summers are cool and bush beans do better where summers are hot. If you live in an area with moderate to warm summer temperatures, both types of beans will be successful and can be planted side by side. In cool summer areas, it would be wiser to plant pole beans; in hot summer areas, bush beans would be the better choice.