

- The Frugal Localvore
- 2007 Farm Bill Report

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Bean Varieties

by Sarah Jane Williamson, Jubilee Farm

Beans are some of the most rewarding of all vegetables for the home garden. They are notoriously prolific, so you can harvest plenty from just a few square feet. And the garden-fresh ones are far superior to those aged and shriveled specimens, shipped in from God-knows-where. But, as with many other vegetables, the sheer number of types and varieties of beans can be overwhelming. Bush beans, pole beans, green beans, purple beans, Italian style, French style; with limited time and space, how do you choose which to grow? Here follows a brief survey of favorites from people who know their beans.

The most common type of garden bean is probably the bush green bean. Provider seems to be a popular favorite of many experts. Tom Stearns, founder of High Mowing Organic Seeds, says that Provider is one of his favorites. "It's a great standby," he says. Chris Deasy, customer service rep for Johnny's Selected Seeds likes it because it's early and dependable, and has "a wonderful taste". She mentioned that the Johnny's catalog lists E-Z Pick as the best-tasting bush green variety that they offer, but she hasn't had a chance to taste them from her own garden. Last year she planted them in between two other bean varieties. "The Japanese beetles skipped both of the others to concentrate on the E-Z Picks, and ate them all. I just didn't get the opportunity to taste a single one." Perhaps Japanese beetles know a thing or two about green bean flavor.

Beyond the basic green bean are many types of beans you may not have tried yet. Ellen Ogden, co-founder of The Cook's Garden and food writer, wants people to know about Green Anellino. "It's an Italian variety that's curled. They have a really good flavor, and they look really beautiful on a plate." The Cook's Garden was an early pioneer of French, or filet beans in this country. "We were trying to provide seeds of things that you couldn't find in the grocery store." Filet beans are much like regular green beans, but are harvested while very slim. Ellen's partial to the heirloom variety Triumphe de Farcy. She likes the flavor and the beautiful light purple stripes. Tom Stearns likes the filet varieties Tavera and Maxibel.

Continued on Page 12



Golden Rocky Variety. Photo by High Mowing Organic Seeds



E-Z Pick Variety. Photo courtesy of Johnny's Selected Seeds, Winslow, Maine



Snap Bean Varieties. Photo by High Mowing Organic Seeds

Bean Varieties

Continued from page 1

“They’re sweeter and more tender than regular green beans,” he says. Stearns also recommends the yellow bean Golden Rocky. “It’s sweet, tender, disease resistant, and a really good yielder.”

All of the varieties mentioned so far are bush beans, but pole beans can have really great advantages for the home gardener. Because they grow on trellises, they take up much less room. Harvest goes on throughout the whole season, and you can pick them while standing up. Ellen Ogden says, “I have a pretty small garden now, and I only want to grow things that are really great.” She recommends the pole variety Trionfo Viletto. “It’s really beautiful: the leaves have purple veins, the flowers are violet, and the beans are purple. They also stay slim like a filet bean, so they don’t get big and bad.” Tom Stearns says, “Rattlesnake is by far my favorite pole bean. It’s an heirloom Italian-style bean that’s big but very tender, and beautiful because it’s green mottled with purple.” (Italian or Roma-style beans are flat-podded and tend to have a rich, full-bodied flavor.) Rob Johnston, co-owner and founder of Johnny’s Selected Seeds, feels that pole beans taste far superior to bush beans. He says that the very best-tasting bean in the world is the pole bean Fortex. He’s in good company, Enid Wonnacott, Executive Director of NOFA-VT and longtime gardener, says that Fortex is “by far the very best bean variety. Ever.”

Enid’s Dilly Beans

1. Sterilize jars and seals
2. Prepare brine as follows and heat to boiling:
2 cups of white vinegar and 3 cups of cider vinegar
5 cups of water
1/2 cup of pickling salt
3. Put into hot, sterilized quart jar: 1-2 tsp of dill seed, 1 tsp of mustard seed, 1/2 tsp of crushed red pepper (optional), 2-4 cloves of garlic and a sprig of fresh dill
4. Pack washed beans as tightly as you can into jars. Make sure beans are not too tall or they will ruin the seal
5. Pour hot brine over beans, leaving 1/4” headspace
6. Seal and process in boiling water bath for 5 minutes

www.agri-dynamics.com

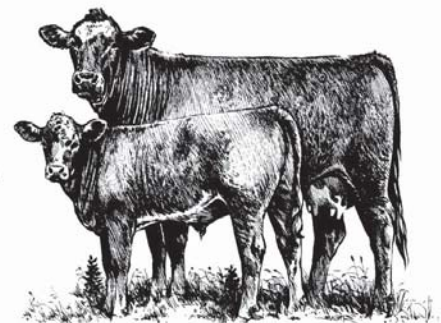
Toll Free: 1.877.393.4484

AGRI DYNAMICS



Introducing our new
**Compound
Herbal Extracts**

Quality herbal formulas that
can compliment Integrative
veterinary medicine.



From the producers of
Desert Dyna-Min, Oxy-phyte, and Biocel CBT