

Snake Beans

Vigna unguiculata · Legume family

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Annual, direct sown, vigorous climber

MATURITY 60–75 days to first harvest



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Regular



SOIL PH
6.0–7.2



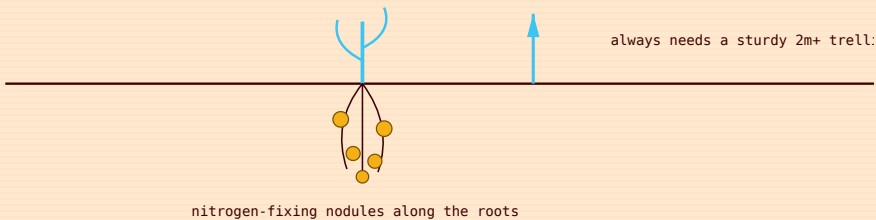
SPACING
15cm × 70cm



DEPTH
3–4cm

01 Nitrogen fixers

Snake beans are a warm-climate climbing legume, a different addition to any homestead than the dry bush beans on this site - picked young and tender as a fresh pod vegetable, not dried, and among the most prolific producers once summer heat properly arrives.



02 Planting

METHOD	Direct sow along the base of a trellis - soak seed overnight first to speed germination.
SOIL	Well-drained, moderately fertile - avoid heavy feeding, which pushes leaf growth over pods.
TIMING	Sow once soil is reliably warm and frost risk has passed - growth is slow in cool weather, then accelerates fast once summer heat arrives.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

04 Problems

- **Bean fly** — larvae tunnel into stems near soil level; keep seedlings growing strongly, rotate planting sites.
- **Aphids** — clusters on new growth and flower buds; hose off, encourage ladybirds.
- **Pod borer** — holes in developing pods; pick regularly and remove affected pods promptly.
- **Poor pod set in cool weather** — a heat-loving plant; flowering stalls below consistent warmth, then resumes once it arrives.

03 Growing care

- Build a strong trellis at least 2m tall before sowing - vines overwhelm flimsy supports within weeks.
- Run the trellis north-south so both sides get direct light through the day.
- Water regularly at the soil level - snake beans tolerate short dry spells, but consistent moisture gives the best pods.
- Pick continuously once producing - regular picking is what keeps vines setting new pods.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Best picked young and tender, at around 30cm - overly mature pods turn tough and starchy.
METHOD	Snap or snip pods by hand; pick every few days once producing to keep vines setting new pods.
CURING	Not applicable - snake beans are eaten fresh as a pod vegetable, not dried.
STORAGE	Fridge, a loose bag: about a week. Best flavour and texture used fresh within a few days of picking.
PRESERVING	See Freezing Produce (blanch and freeze a glut) or Canning & Bottling (pickled beans) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.
RECIPES	Try our Stir-Fried Snake Beans — a way to use a glut.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Corn Cucumber Radish	Onion Garlic Chilli	A nitrogen-fixer, though it uses a different rhizobia strain to common beans - a standard bean inoculant gives no benefit here.