

PLANT PROFILE

Runner bean



Latin Name: Phaseolus coccineus

Soil type: Free draining soil, prepare by forking in well-rotted manure

Soil Ph: Flower set is better in alkaline, chalky soils. Neutral or acidic soil may benefit from using lime

Aspect: Sunny, sheltered spot

Hardiness: Prone to frost damage

Propagation: Sow from seed indoors in small pots late April or May. Harden off (acclimatise) young plants before planting out after the risk of frost has passed.

Sow from seed outdoors in small pots. Place the pots outside in a cold frame or in a sheltered position. Once the beans reach 8cm tall you can plant out into their final positions, June/July.

Direct sow in the ground from mid-May until end of June, 5cm deep, two seeds to a bamboo cane, spaced 15cm apart

Growing: Runner beans need a support to climb up. Make an A frame from 2 rows of bamboo canes with a horizontal cane across the top to brace the frame. Or make wig wams in smaller spaces. Regular watering and mulching in June will help to set flowers

Harvesting: Start harvesting when the pods are 15-20cm long and pick regularly to ensure continuous cropping

Pests: Black bean aphid, slugs, snails

Uses: Edible, can save beans to dry out and use as seeds the following season