



Bush Bean Bonanza

by Bev Servadio, UC Master Gardener

I was flipping through a magazine this week and came across an article by an Interior Decorator praising the beauty of a bean plant bloom that matched a home's black & white décor. It was the Fava Bean. The Fava is a favorite spring planted bean in our household. We always plant a spring and a fall crop in our square foot garden. It's true that the flower bloom is nice, but the bean is outstanding in flavor and easy to grow. I had to wonder if the Decorator ever tasted them. That prompted me to check my "Vegetable Planting Guide" to see if beans could be planted now. The guide is available on the Master Gardeners web site at <http://cetulare.ucdavis.edu> - click on Master Gardeners, Local Gardening Information, and then Vegetables. I found that I could plant beans now through July and expect to harvest from mid-July through October.

We are including four bush beans in our Square Foot Garden that you can plant now in your garden. A "bush bean" is a bean plant that does not require a trellis to climb up. Most are between 20" to 30" tall and are "bushy" in growth habit. Beans like warm soil temperatures with the best germination occurring in the 70° to 85° range. Direct seed into your well worked garden bed and sprouting should occur in 8 to 16 days. Beans are light feeders – if you've added in a good compost blend to your garden bed, skip the fertilizer. Too much fertilizer and you'll have lots of foliage but very few bean pods. The plants need consistent water in our hot summer weather. Using mulch around the plants will help hold the moisture. Look for the seeds at your local nurseries, big box stores, and on the internet.

We planted this delicious line-up.

Roma II - Described as a 6 inch flat, savory, tender pod. The seed is slow to develop giving you a longer time frame for picking & eating the pod like you would green beans. The plant is reported to be heavy yielding.



Internet searches give this one high marks for being easy to grow and having great flavor. Plant every 20 days in season to have a continual harvest. The excess can be frozen. Days to maturity – 59.

Cannellini Lingot: Oh boy!

Think homemade minestrone soup. The carrots, onions, and garlic in our garden have been waiting for this one! This is a white kidney bean described as rich, meaty, delicious and satisfying.



This variety has pods that are 6" to 8" long. Days to maturity for fresh shelling – 85.



Flambo: Like its name, this bean is a flamboyant plant. In our edible landscape this will be a brilliant pop of color with purple tinged flowers followed by fuchsia and cream mottled 4” long

Pods. The beans inside are of the same coloring only deeper tones. Add this one to your soups or pureed for hummus. Days to maturity for fresh shelling – 75. For dry bean storage, leave pods on bush until the bush has completely dried and then harvest the pods and shell by hand. Store in a cool place. These instructions apply to the following two beans also.



Black Coco: The Black Coco can be eaten as a snap bean – like the green beans – or as a fresh shelled bean – or as a dry bean for storage. The pods are 5” long and easy to pick. Use this one for Black Bean Soup

and enjoy its robust flavor. Days to maturity for fresh shelling – 95.

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