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# THE THRIFTY GARDENER

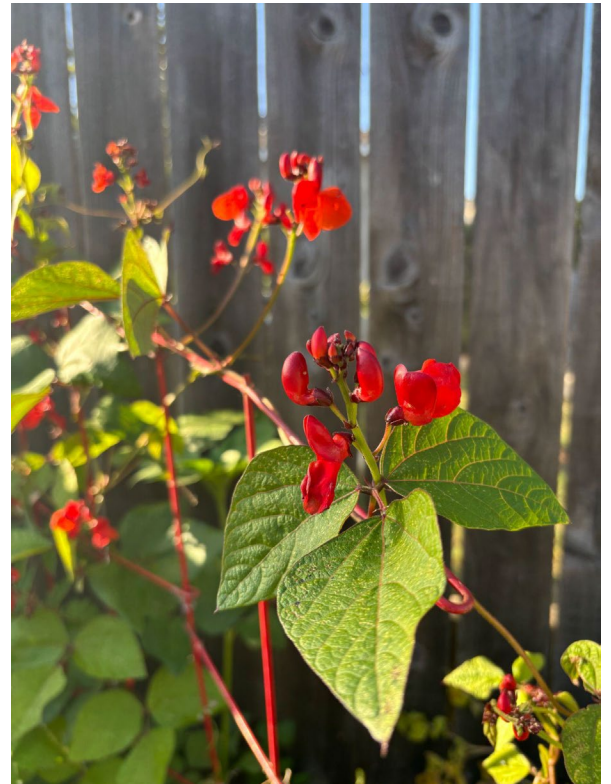
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August is the last month to start many of our warm weather crops from seed. That includes beans, corn, summer squash, and cucumbers! Summer is the most productive time in the garden; if you have been telling yourself you want to start but haven't gotten around to it, now is your time!

## Beans

Growing beans from seed can be extremely thrifty. Buy a seed pack, or even a pack of beans from the store (yes, those are seeds!), soak overnight, and plant in the garden! Soaking is not essential, but it will help more of your seeds germinate faster. There are two main types of beans: bush and pole. Bush beans grow in, you guessed it, a bushy habit and do not require a trellis. Pole beans are less rigid and require a trellis or other plant as structure to grow on. You can find more tips on thrifty trellis options in [last month's issue](#). Beans are also nitrogen fixers so, as they grow, they can put essential nitrogen back in the soil and make it available for other plants.

Personally, I have had the most success with pole beans. I have especially been loving scarlet runner beans, they are delicious but also so pretty! Even if you don't eat the beans they provide beautiful red flowers for your garden, while also fixing nitrogen in the soil. We call that a thrifty triple threat!



## Pest Control

While the summer is a great time for growing, it can also be an abundant time for pests. If your garden is getting chomped, don't feel like you have to turn to expensive pesticides or give up altogether!



The thriftiest way to fight a pest problem is to first, determine what your pest is, and second, find a specific solution. Gophers can be a constant struggle in Ventura County; if you are seeing mounds of loose dirt in your garden or one of your plants has completely disappeared, roots and all, it is probably a gopher. To protect against gophers, gardeners will often use hardware mesh, a rigid metal grid, to line the bottom of their beds. This stuff works great, but can be a little pricey. For a thrifty option, take a trip to the dollar store and look for wire waste baskets. These can be buried and your plant put inside to protect its major roots. If your pest is rabbits, place the basket above ground and over the plant for a thrifty pest guard. If your plant is tall, try cutting the bottom off with wire cutters to give the plant somewhere to go while still providing essential protection down below.

## The Thrifty Gardener

If you need help identifying a pest and finding the best deterrent, the Master Gardener's have a resource for that! The Helpdesk is a wonderful and free resource for home gardeners in Ventura County. Make sure to take a picture of your pest if possible and then send that, your zip code, and a brief description to [mgventura@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgventura@ucdavis.edu).

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