

Bean, Yard-Long—*Vigna unguiculata* subsp. *sesquipedalis* (L.) Verde¹

James M. Stephens²

Yard-long bean has such other common names as asparagus bean, Peru bean, and snake bean. It is closely related to Southern peas or cowpeas. As the names imply, the pods are quite long, often reaching 36 inches in length. These long, immature pods are often used as snap beans.

Description

The annual climbing plant resembles the Southern pea, but is much more a trailing and climbing variety, often reaching 9 to 12 feet in height. The plant is quite ornamental because of the large violet-blue flowers and the draping pods.

Culture

Yard-long bean is grown in Florida primarily in home gardens. When seeds are planted in the fall or late March in the Gainesville area, the plants produce pods quite well. The cultural requirements and problems are much like those for Southern peas. Aphids are especially attracted to the pods of this plant. Owing to the long trailing nature of the plant, a 6-foot trellis should be provided. Space the plants 8 to 12 inches in the row with 3 to 4 feet between rows.

Use

Pick the pods before the seeds mature. In this tender stage, they can be snapped and cooked in various ways. Some suggestions are to (a) stew with tomato sauce, (b) boil and drain, then season with lemon juice and oil, or (c) simmer in butter with oil and garlic.



Figure 1. Yard-long bean
Credits: James M. Stephens

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