

Kidney Beans

Phaseolus vulgaris · Legume family

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Annual, direct sown, warm season

MATURITY 90–110 days

Kidney beans are toxic when raw or undercooked, containing a natural toxin (phytohaemagglutinin) that causes severe nausea and vomiting even in small amounts. Always boil dried kidney beans hard for at least 10 minutes before finishing cooking - never rely on a slow cooker alone, since the low, gentle heat can actually increase the toxin rather than break it down.



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Regular



SOIL PH
6.0–7.2



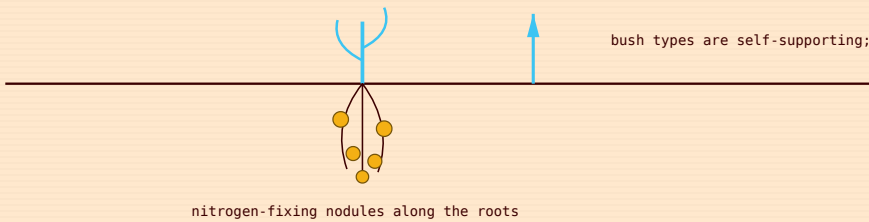
SPACING
10cm × 45cm



DEPTH
3–4cm

01 Nitrogen fixers

Kidney beans are a soil-building crop for a [homestead](#) — vigorous nodulated roots and a dry-bean pantry staple, but a true warm-season crop that needs the soil to have properly warmed before sowing.



nitrogen-fixing nodules along the roots

02 Planting

METHOD	Direct sow into well-prepared beds - kidney beans dislike root disturbance and don't transplant well.
SOIL	Loose, well-drained, moderately fertile loam.
TIMING	Sow in late spring once all frost risk has passed and soil has properly warmed - cold, wet soil causes seed rot rather than germination.

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.

03 Growing care

- Choose bush varieties for a compact, self-supporting plant, or pole varieties for a longer, heavier-yielding season on a trellis.
- Water at the soil level rather than overhead, to keep foliage dry and discourage fungal disease.
- No nitrogen fertiliser needed - kidney beans fix their own; a light phosphorus feed at planting is enough.
- Leave roots in the ground after harvest for the nitrogen benefit to the next crop.

04 Problems

- Mexican bean beetle** — skeletonises leaves; hand-pick or use row covers early in the season.
- Powdery mildew** — fine white coating in humid weather; water at soil level, improve airflow.
- Bacterial blight** — water-soaked leaf spots; use disease-free seed, avoid overhead watering.
- Bean mosaic virus** — mottled, distorted leaves; remove and destroy affected plants, control aphids.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Pods are dry, brittle, and rattle when shaken; beans inside are hard.
METHOD	Snip pods by hand once dry, or pull whole bush plants and hang to finish drying under cover in humid weather.
CURING	Shell once fully dry - a bitten bean should show no tooth mark if it's ready.
STORAGE	Airtight, cool, dark: 2-3 years. Always cook thoroughly before eating - see the safety note above.
PRESERVING	See Canning & Bottling (canning cooked beans) if you want them ready-to-eat on the shelf, beyond the dry storage above.
RECIPES	Try our Kidney Bean Chili — amounts, ready in an hour.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY

Corn

Cucumber

Potato

AVOID NEARBY

Onion

Garlic

Fennel

ROTATION NOTE

A nitrogen-fixer - good precursor to heavy feeders like corn or brassicas

