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i INFORMATION SHEET

Broad bean crop sheet

These are our top tips on how to grow broad beans. Broad beans are the hardiest type of bean grown in the UK.

School term: Early Autumn, Late Spring, Early Summer, Late Summer

Level of experience: No experience needed

Subject(s): Science

Sowing

When: October to November, or February to March

Indoors (late winter)

1. Sow seeds individually in 4-5cm deep in 9cm pots filled with compost.
2. Place pots on a windowsill or in a glasshouse and water when the compost is dry.
3. Plant out when the plants are approximately 5cm high. Make a hole with a trowel slightly bigger than the pot and ensure the base of the plant is level with the soil. Firm the soil with the back of the trowel and water well.

Outdoors (autumn or spring)

1. Sow seeds 5cm deep and 20-30cm apart in a row.
2. Cover the seeds with soil and firm with the back of a trowel.
3. Label the row, make another row 25-30cm away and repeat the process described above.

Growing

- In colder climates, it may be useful to cover seedlings with **horticultural fleece** for the winter.
- If the stems grow tall, make a frame from four canes and string around the row. This will support the plants and keep the beans off of the soil.
- **Pinch out** new shoots at the top of plants once the flower buds have formed to encourage bushier growth.
- Watch out for mice eating your seeds and pigeons eating your plants.

Harvesting

When: 30 weeks from sowing if sown in autumn, 15 weeks from sowing if sown in late winter or spring

- Pick pods when they are about 7.5cm long, when the pods become swollen.
- If you are picking them but are going to shell them instead of cooking them whole, wait until the beans are visible through the pod. The scar on the bean (where it was attached in the pod) should still be white or green. If it's black, the bean won't taste very good. Younger beans are more tasty.
- Pick the pods by hand. Hold the plant with one hand and the pod with the other. Gently tug the pod downwards or cut off of the plant with scissors.

Using

- Try making a hummus by mashing cooked and skinned beans with some crushed garlic, lemon juice and olive oil.



Varieties to try

- 'Aguadulce' and 'Sutton' - suitable for autumn sowing
- 'Crimson Flowered' - a red flowering variety
- 'Robin Hood' - a small, compact variety