

SLI All About Beans Training

July 2020

You Tube link to video about beans <https://youtu.be/YGlcZ9hAzMk>

Varieties

Over the years SLI have tried a number of varieties of beans and below are some which have worked well on our Marlpit site.

Enorma	Runner bean with red flowers
Super Aquadulce	Broad bean - good for overwintering
Borlotti	French climbing bean which is best grown for drying and storing

Beans have also been used from Garden Organic's Heritage Seed library:

Crimson Flower	Broad bean with small tightly packed beans in a close-fitting pod
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Three varieties of climbing French bean are being trialled this year. Some past trials revealed poor germination rates or only produced a small harvest. SLI prefers to focus on providing a small range of vegetables that are easy to grow, good for the soil health and not too demanding on resources like water and manure.

If you have a particular favourite you want to grow it might be worth persevering with the seeds for several years as climate and soil conditions can vary and affect how the beans perform. Recently we have had warmer autumns and beans planted a little later than recommended may still do well.

Dried beans

The borlotti beans in the video are recommended for drying. The pods should be left to ripen on the plants before harvesting. Borlottis are good as dried beans to use in casseroles, stews etc. The beans can also be blanched and frozen for use later - then they can then be used straight from the freezer without the need for prior soaking or long cooking.

Communal bean growing area: new for 2020

Beans will be grown in the same area several years running. The supports are sturdy and will remain in place for 4-5 years. This year's crop were all planted on one side of the supports and next year planting will be done on the other side. This alternating pattern can be repeated for several years with a good dressing of compost.

The communal area might provide a large enough area for growing beans in sufficient quantities to be useful as a staple dried bean during the winter.

Seed saving

The best seeds for saving come from the lowest pods. These are the first the plant produces and so have the longest time to mature. The Real Seed website has more information about seed saving.

Aphid protection

Broad beans are very susceptible to blackfly / aphids. Spray with soapy water every two or three days. The spray will kill the aphids, though they remain on the plant. Repeat spraying is necessary to kill the next batch of aphids which appear.