



## PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Phaseolus lunatus* L.

GENUS *Phaseolus* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Lima bean

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Seeds, Leaves, Pods, Vegetable, Flowers

The leaves, young pods and seeds are all eaten. The seeds are eaten fresh or after drying. They are also fried in oil. Dried beans are boiled or baked. They can be used in soups and stews.

The seeds are sometimes grown as bean sprouts then cooked and eaten.

CAUTION Some kinds have poison (hydrocyanic acid). This is destroyed by thorough cooking.

As well the beans contain a protein inhibitor but this is destroyed by cooking.

## DESCRIPTION

A perennial climbing bean. It is often a tall vigorously climbing plant which can keep growing for some years. The leaves are slightly rounded at the base and pointed at the tip. The flower is white or yellow. The keel of the flower is twisted which helps tell the difference between this bean and Lablab bean. The pods are long (10 cm), flattened and curved and have 3-4 seeds which are very variable in colour. The seeds are large. The seeds have a short round hilum where the seed is attached to the pod. The seeds also have lines going out from this point across the bean seed.

## HABITAT

It suits warm and subtropical areas. In the tropics it is common between 500 and 2100 m altitude but grows to the limit of cultivation (2700 m). For germination it must have a soil temperature above 15.5°C and cannot withstand frost. In very hot weather seeds often do not set. It does best in a temperature range 14-21°C. It is sensitive to a pH less than 6. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 8-11. In Yunnan.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

It is grown from seed. Coloured seeds are often hard to get to grow but white seeded kinds start growing easily. Sow 3-4 seeds in a hill and put a stick 2-3 m tall in the middle. Hills should be about 1 m apart. Seeds should be 2-4 cm deep.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

Harvesting can begin after about 100 days. Dried beans can be stored for several months. Yields of 0.12 kg of seeds per square metre have been obtained. The yield of pods can be 1 kg per square metre. The leaves, pods and flowers can be plucked from the plant.

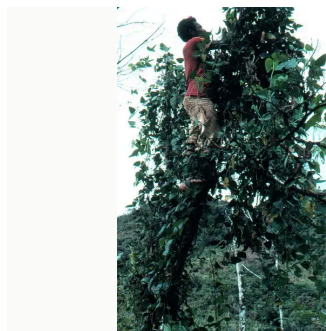
## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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