

## HOPI-RED LIMA

*Phaseolus lunatus*

Leguminosae- Legume family

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### ECHO PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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**Origin** - The Hopi red lima is believed to have originated in Mexico and south-western areas of the United States. ECHO seeds originally came from dry-land regions of Kenya.

**Uses** - The primary use is human consumption of the dry beans. Hopi red lima can also be used as a cover crop, though it is unlikely to match Lablab bean's ability to fix nitrogen and cover the ground thoroughly. The plants and green bean pods can be used as fodder. It is especially recommended for semi-arid areas.

**Cultivation** - Hopi red lima seeds should be planted directly into the prepared soil rather than transplanting. Cold temperatures can hinder germination. Sow the seeds about 2-3cm deep and about 45-50cm apart. Flowering begins 70-100 days after sowing. The plant prefers a dry, frost-free growing season but if frosted, will die back and re-grow. Its growth is slowed down by cool weather. It is very drought resistant and prefers light, well-drained soil with a pH of 6-7. It is tolerant of a wide variety of soil types. The beans can be planted in mounds and trellised or broadcast to produce a thick ground cover. Better quality beans will be obtained if trellised – Hopi red limas like to climb. Hopi red limas are perennial and can be grown for several years. Before the wet season, the vine should be pruned back. Its growth may decline but is rejuvenated after the rainy season is over. The reason for pruning is to get a healthy flush of new growth to withstand periods of intense rain and humidity.

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**Harvesting and Seed Production** - Occasional pruning is recommend to stimulate new vigorous growth. Pods are produced continually throughout its life providing multiple harvests. Dry beans are ready for picking after 6-8 months. The seeds are easy to collect and can be kept in cool, dry storage for many years. Seeds are small and have a distinctive red color.

**Pests and Diseases** - It is extremely hardy and vigorous. Hopi red lima bean is susceptible to root-knot nematodes though it does continue to persist with infected roots. It is also susceptible to fungal diseases in wet seasons. Pods and beans can be damaged by true bugs of the order *Heteroptera*.

**Cooking and Nutrition** - The beans can be eaten as a pulse. Beans should be soaked 4-6 hours before cooking. Boil the beans, discard the water, then cook in new water before eating. The beans and leaves should never be eaten raw, as they contain prussic acid. The lima beans are high in protein (up to 27%). After they are boiled and cooked, they can be refrigerated and eaten cold.

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