



## Grow pulses in your home garden!

Pulses are beans, peas, and lentils that are harvested when dry. Like the green beans many gardeners are already familiar with, pulses are easy to grow! As an added bonus, they are as nutritious for the soil as they are for your body. Try a few varieties in your garden, and see how well your garden grows!



- **Choose a good spot.** Pulses prefer pH in the 6.0-6.8 range and with well-drained, warm soils. Choose a sunny or part-shade location. You might want to consider adding some sand to the pulses' growing soil to ensure drainage. In addition, we've had good success planting more vining pulses in pots – so they can be grown on your patio!

- **Decide on the desired growth habit.** Some pulses grow as vines that can happily climb a trellis, and others have a more orderly,

bushy growth. We suggest using poles or other supports for pintos and cowpea (read package instructions for other guidance).

- **Choose your favorites!** Most seed companies offer pulse seeds. Search their online listings for “dry beans” and “lentils.” Some pulses come with legends and stories all their own. Enjoy the search! You can find a link to several companies [here](#).
- **Plant the seeds.** Following package instructions for spacing, make holes in your plot, and plant one seed per hole. We suggest soaking the seeds in room temperature water overnight to help with germination speed.
- **Warning: Rabbits love pulses.** Make sure your tender, emerging pulses have protection from neighborhood rabbits with suitable fencing.
- **Mind the weather.** Pulses are drought-tolerant, but even moisture is important, especially as flowers and pods develop. You'll want to water more frequently to get your plants started, but then watch how they are doing after that. Wet pulse plants are susceptible to white mold, so avoid handling plants during wet conditions.
- **Harvest time!** Harvest when pods are paper-like and dry. You can remove the seeds from the pods in several ways—



1. Remove the shells by hand, preferably on a front porch with a refreshing glass of lemonade nearby. Keep those shells to put in your compost pile or add directly to your garden, as they add nitrogen and other nutrients back into the soil.

2. Place the pods in a pillow case or cloth bag. Jump on it (really!) or knead it with your hands so the pods split and the pulse seeds spill out within the bag. Next pour the contents onto a window screen or a baking pan with a slight edge. Winnow the papery pods and their crumbs away by gently tossing the seeds and pods into the air in front of a fan (or wait for a windy day). But don't stand downwind! You'll see the light-weight pods and crumbs fly away, leaving your harvest behind!



**Enjoy your pulse harvest!** Find recipes [here](#).

#### **Other ideas to consider:**

- **As with any gardening project, have your soil tested.** Your county extension agent can help—search [here](#). A typical test will reveal the phosphorus (P), potassium (K), acidity or alkalinity (pH), and lime requirements, organic matter, and texture class (proportions of sand, silt, and clay). It can also include testing for lead and salt levels. Here's a [sample report](#) with helpful explanations.



- **Consider inoculants.** Pulses benefit the soil by working with common soil bacteria to pull nitrogen from the air. Think of these beneficial bacteria, called rhizobia, as a microscopic herd of do-gooders. Inoculants can be added with the seed to help grow your herd. Read more [here](#).

- **Are you a seed saver?** Pulses are self-pollinating, but may also have insect help that results in cross-pollination. If your varieties are separated by five feet or more, your odds of a pure offspring increase. Look for changes in the

seed coat color that may indicate cross-pollination took place. To save for next season, be sure the seed is completely dry (no imprint when you press your fingernail into the seed) before storing in a cool, dry location.

- **Rotate your crops.** We know you'll enjoy growing pulses yearly, so plan to move their location every year or so. This is good practice for two reasons: it cuts down on the possibilities of disease, and since pulses improve soil health, whatever you plant in its spot the following year will benefit!
- **Ready for some fun?** Pulses lend themselves to various planting arrangements. Try these:

Three Sisters planting: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/81275968248799261/>

Bean Teepee: <http://todaysmama.com/2012/04/big-backyard-plans/>

Bean Screen: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/48976714674751427/>

Winter (or any time) Sprouts: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/298082069062566532/>

Here are some suggestions of where to buy seeds. You can search your favorite seed purveyor, too, for their selection of "dry bean" and "lentil" seeds:



### **Pinto Beans**

<http://www.bountifulgardens.org/Bean-Pinto-dry-bush/productinfo/VBE-2328/>  
[http://www.edenbrothers.com/store/pinto-bean-seeds.html?gclid=CPXRqfect8QCFYc8aQodt50A\\_A](http://www.edenbrothers.com/store/pinto-bean-seeds.html?gclid=CPXRqfect8QCFYc8aQodt50A_A)



### **Kidney Beans**

<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/p-8395-light-red-kidney.aspx>  
<http://www.amazon.com/Dark-Red-Kidney-Bean-Seeds/dp/B006PFW7QY>



### **Chickpeas (Garbanzo Beans)**

<http://www.bountifulgardens.org/Garbanzo/products/20/>



### **Lentils**

<http://www.bountifulgardens.org/Lentil-Large-Brown-Organic/productinfo/VLE-4082/>



### **Pigeon Pea**

[http://www.amazon.com/Organic-Gandules-Pigeon-seeds-Prorganics/dp/B00HTQK666/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1426866425&sr=8-1&keywords=pigeon+pea+seeds](http://www.amazon.com/Organic-Gandules-Pigeon-seeds-Prorganics/dp/B00HTQK666/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1426866425&sr=8-1&keywords=pigeon+pea+seeds)



### **Fava Bean**

<http://www.harrisseeds.com/storefront/p-91-bean-broad-improved-long-pod.aspx>  
<http://www.bountifulgardens.org/Fava-Broad-Beans/products/19/>



### **Mung Bean**

<http://www.burpee.com/vegetables/sprouting-seed/sprout-seed-mung-bean-prod000902.html?catId=2042&omn2pd=bz>