



SOYBEANS

Glycine max

The soybean varieties available to grow yourself are much more tasty and digestible than those grown by large-scale agriculture, which have been largely bred for animal use and/or are increasingly GMO varieties. Soybeans are the only legume with all 9 amino acids.

PLANTING

Soybeans are planted and harvested similarly to bush dry beans but require a warmer soil temperature to germinate. They prefer a loose well-drained, slightly acidic loam. Soybeans fix nitrogen so soil does not need to be overly fertilized. We plant them in full sun at the end of May, spaced 6" apart with rows 3' apart. An inoculant is helpful if available.

GROWING METHODS

MAINTENANCE

Soybeans have a taproot and are drought-tolerant and unlikely to require water with proper spacing planted on flat ground. They grow slowly at the start so several weedings are required before they shade out the competition.

HARVEST

Soybeans are ready to harvest as dry beans when the leaves have fallen and the beans rattle in their pods. Pods can be picked individually or quickly stripped from the stalk with an upward motion of one gloved hand.

THRESHING

The easiest and most efficient homestead method is to throw soybean bean pods onto a tarp and stomp/dance on them. Be sure they are dry enough that a fingernail can't make an indentation. Pods can also be broken open one by one.

PROCESSING

SEED-SAVING/STORAGE

Save seed from the earliest-maturing and most productive plants. What you eat is what you plant. Soybeans are in-breeding plants and do not cross with one another so several varieties can be grown adjacent. Leave soybeans in paper grocery bags or breathable bins until fully dry before storage in an airtight container.

COOKING TIPS

Soybeans can be used at the shell stage when the seeds are just starting to plump the pods. Steam unshelled pods for 5 minutes, put them under cold water and squeeze the beans out. These freeze well. Good cooking varieties cook in about 90 minutes on low simmer after an overnight soak.

YIELDS & LABOR

Yields are not as high as regular dry beans. We typically yield 6-8 lbs (15-20 cups) per 100 RF. Our first year, we spent about 8 hours of total labor for this amount.

BBGP RESEARCH

VARIETIES

We have successfully grown Black Jet, Manitoba, and Grand Forks, all originally obtained from Salt Spring Seeds in Canada. All are excellent cooking varieties and taste fantastic as-is.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Soybeans are one of the world's oldest crops, having been grown in Asia for 5,000 years. They contain a very high amount of protein (35%) and are an important oil crop.