

## Bean Nation!

By: Betsy Bearden

There is nothing like the smell of freshly picked green beans. They smell like the good earth. Of course, I am speaking of Pole beans; not the bush bean variety. We grew bush beans last year, and they were such a disappointment. To me, the bush bean just isn't the kind of green bean that Mama fixes with red potatoes on holidays and Sunday dinner. She was happy to point that out to me last year when I took her a mess (what's a mess?) of the skinny little 12-15 bush beans I was so proud of. I vowed this year we would have the real deal.

Actually, I have bought thousands of green beans from the produce section at the grocery stores, of course, but I have never grown any type bean in my life until last year. To be honest with you, I didn't know bush beans weren't the kind that grew up the little bamboo teepees. Um, you don't have to tell anyone I said that—me being the Tofu Queen and all. So, the first of May, Steven made the bamboo teepees, and I followed the package directions and placed the beans in water to germinate overnight. Let me tell you, one package of green bean seeds+overnight germination= a lot of honkin beans to plant!

They are planted in the five bamboo teepees in my raised-bed garden, every two inches along the fence in my herb garden, and five huge terra cotta planters (with teepees in them) on my deck. You would think I had planted them all, but no! I had between 40 and 60 beans germinating in water left over. I was frantic and desperately seeking a home for them. I looked at our Eucalyptus tree and noticed it had at least six or seven feet of free space along its trunk, and about that time, Steven said, "No." I looked at the telephone pole, Steven said, "No." How about up the Mimosa—"No."

Well, I just couldn't throw them out, so I saved them, and contemplated how they would look growing up the columns of our front porch. "No!" Two days later the things had begun to sprout! Now I was panicking. It just so happened that my niece, Brittany, stopped by that afternoon to deliver my Tupperware from her recent party. That party was dangerous because I learned about a nine-minute microwave Tupperware chocolate cake recipe bomb. Just what I need. Not!

*Hmm...Brittany. Yesss, Brittany,* with her newfound enthusiasm for growing herbs and vegetables. As she was handing me the Tupperware from the back of her truck, I noticed she had rosemary plants, blueberry plants and tomatoes in the back. *Ahhhh, this would be perfect! Perrrfect!* "Hey!" "Do y'all like green beans?" I asked.

Brittany said they loved them but had never grown them and really didn't have anything to grow them on. She asked if it would be okay to let them grow up their Dogwood tree, or along the fence or maybe along the back porch. "They will grow on anything," I assured her. She took the beans.

I am not even going to tell you about the snap peas, but there will be many ... there will be many. Yes, my pots runneth over. When I first looked at their little green sprout heads emerging from the soil, all I could do was stand there and say: "Whoa. Bean Nation!"

As for my beans, at this point in mid-June one of the beans runners has climbed to the top of the bamboo teepee, and where it goes from there, I don't know quite yet. But if a man climbs down it with a hen laying golden eggs, I will quickly take the hen and thereafter, chop the beanstalk down.

### Fresh Green Beans and Feta Cheese

1 pound of fresh green beans (snapped and stringed)  
1/2 cup chopped green olives  
3 Roma Tomatoes- diced  
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese  
1 T balsamic vinegar  
1 T extra virgin olive oil  
1 t red wine vinegar  
Himalayan salt and black pepper to taste.

- Steam green beans for 20-25 minutes
- Place the cooked green beans in a large serving bowl.
- Add remaining ingredients. Give it a good stir and enjoy.

Now, does anyone out there know how to preserve fresh picked green beans?

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