

Technical Bulletin #59:

Harvesting and Postharvest Recommendations for Yard Long Bean

1. Quality Standards

As with any vegetable, the quality standards of the yard long bean are defined by the market. This means that before planting any vegetable, producers must discuss with potential buyers the standards they want. For the yard long bean, we have to consider: length of the pod, color, and how to package it (in bundles, loose, in plastic bags, or in harvest crates). The yard long bean is typically harvested when the pods have reached a minimum length of 38 to 45 cm. The most popular cultivars have a medium green color. The highest quality pods are straight, crisp, and uniform in color.

2. Harvesting

- Yard long bean can be harvested in 35 to 40 days after transplanting, depending on cultivars. This is still an immature stage, prior to full development of the seeds and pod.
- Harvesting should be done during the coolest time of the day, which typically is in the early morning. If harvested during the rainy season or very humid days, let the beans dry to avoid disease development. This can be done by leaving the beans out in a shady area.
- Avoid harvesting in the afternoon, as the pods will have lost too much water during the day (dehydration) and will not be crisp enough.
- Harvesting can be done by pinching the stem with the thumbnail pressed against the index finger or with pruning shears or scissors. Always leave at least one centimeter of stem and avoid tearing the pods (if that happens, it is better to discard that pod).
- After harvesting, avoid direct exposure to the sunlight. Heat increases the pod respiration rate and in a few hours (less than five during the dry period) it can lose up to 10 percent of its weight.



Using scissors to harvest the beans.

3. Cleaning

- Spread the pods out in a shallow layer on top of a clean, flat surface, which helps to dissipate field heat before packing.
- Remove any leaves, stems, broken pods, blossom remains, and insect-damaged or partially decayed pods.
- Generally, yard long beans should not be washed because of the likelihood of spreading organisms.
- If washing with water, the pods should be air dried on a clean, flat surface.

4. Sorting

- Sort them into three categories according to length, maturity, and external appearance.
- The pods should be well-formed and straight, uniform in color with a fresh appearance, and tender but firm. They should snap easily when bent.
- They should not bulge, which indicates that the pods are tender with immature seeds. Over-mature beans with bulging pods are tough and fibrous. Too-immature pods are highly susceptible to wilting.



5. Packing

- Put them in a plastic basket, crate, or bamboo basket (use liners such as banana leaves or cushions to cover the rough angles). Arrange them in a semi-circle in a bamboo basket and pile horizontally.
- Avoid over-stacking, which can cause bruising or damage by compression.
- Never pack the pods too tight. They should be loosely packed within the crate to allow for adequate heat dissipation.
- Yard long beans are typically wrapped in bunches for marketing.
- Canvas or polypropylene sacks should not be used because the pods will rapidly heat and wilt due to restricted ventilation.



Grading Yard-Long Bean

6. Transporting

- The vehicle used for transporting should have a roof to shade the loaded crates.
- Avoid stacking the baskets on top of each other.
- The vehicle should have a shelf for basket loading.
- Transporting to the market should be done early in the morning, afternoon, or at night to avoid dehydration.

7. Storage

- Long beans are susceptible to water loss during storage. Therefore, use a wet cloth to cover the baskets.
- They can be stored in an evaporative-control wooden cupboard by frequently sprinkling water on the jute sack.
- Because it is difficult to keep the product under optimum conditions (temperature 5°C, and 95 percent humidity) transport to the market no more than two hours after harvest.

8. Nutritional value

Yard long beans are an excellent source of vitamin C, which helps the body fight infections and keeps skin and teeth healthy. A 100g serving of beans provides 27 percent of the daily requirements for vitamin C. Yard long beans are a good source of calcium and iron. Eating yard long beans with meat and fish also helps your body absorb the iron in those foods. Pregnant women who eat yard long beans benefit from other nutrients such as folates that help ensure their babies are healthy when they are born.

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