

Hyacinth Bean Vine

Dolichos lablab

From the garden of a Parker County Master Gardener

“Hyacinth Bean Vine” is neither a hyacinth nor a true bean. It is a warm weather loving, fast growing, flowering vine, with pretty purple flowers. There is also a white variety. Finding the best time to plant them is sometimes tricky. I plant after April 15th because if you plant and we have a freeze or heavy frost, they would die. Plant in late spring once weather is warm and nights stay above 50 degrees in a full sun area. Like most members of the bean family, if you plant them too early, the seeds will rot in the cold damp ground. However, plant them too late and you will spend the months until fall watering them. If you have extra big extra green leaves and no flowers, it means the plants got too much fertilizer for the plants needs; therefore, if it won't flower (or sets flowers), it results in no pollination and one has to have flowers in order for pollination to occur. It will not make beans if it does not bloom.

Plant in full sun 1½” deep and 6"-8" apart. The beans will not come up immediately, but will sprout in at least 15 days. Germination is usually 7 - 15 days. Keep seedlings watered well. Flowers bloom from summer through fall. Add fertilizer when planting and every month during the season. Use a high phosphorous formula just before the first blooming period. Butterflies are attracted to the bright blooms. Maturity is 8' - 15'. Important Note: Raw beans seeds are poisonous so keep away from children and pets. Plants are annuals and may still be in bloom when frost arrives. Harvesting seed in the fall: Wait till they get brown and crisp on the outside.

Note from another Master Gardener: Because of strong growing habits there is a need for support of a strong trellis, fence or arbor.

Note from a third Master Gardener: I have planted this vine for years and notice that if I plant it in a tight corner where the plant does not get good air circulation and we have more rain than usual, they get powdery mildew on the leaves and on the bean pods. The hyacinth I plant on the chain link fence or a trellis with full sun do not get mildew but I planted one in a corner of my deck that gets sun until 3 p.m. but is protected on the south side and it will get the mildew in a rainy year and will not be affected if we get minimal moisture in the summer and fall.



Hyacinth bean vine is a plant with purplish-pink blossoms and burgundy, heart-shaped foliage.

Type: Annual vine

Bloom Color: Purple to reddish purple (The seedpods are the same claret color of the stems and their smooth shells are so polished, they glisten in the sunlight.)

Bloom Time: Summer into fall

Habit: Climbing

Water: Consistent moisture.

Soil: Average. Well-drained.

Sun: Full sun.

Hardy in Zone 7B

Resists Deer: No

Note: Seeds are poisonous.