

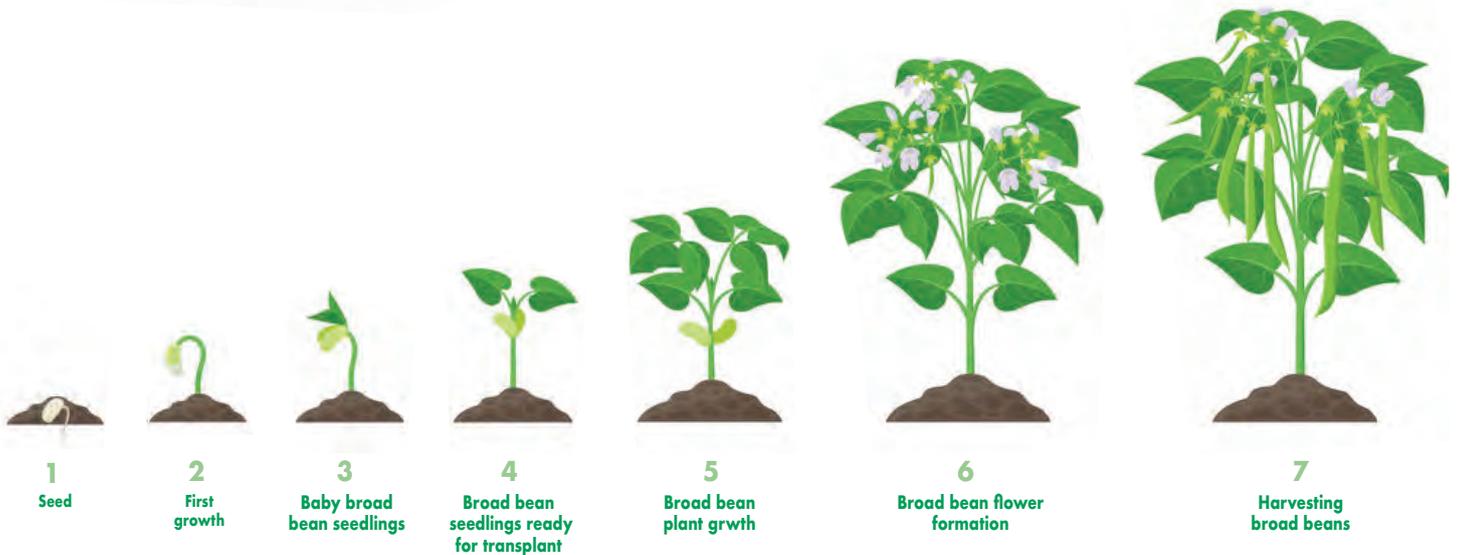
# Growing Broad Beans

Broad beans like other varieties of beans, legumes and peas are a member of the Fabaceae family. Broad beans aptly name 'Vicia faba' – 'faba' translates to 'grower of the beans'. They are different in habit and appearance to any other bean variety. A cool-season crop, they are best grown in winter for a spring harvest. They may take a long time to harvest, 16 to 18 weeks, but the magic bean is easy to grow for a vibrant flower display and a bumper tasty crop.



Preparation time is a bit longer with this veggie as they have a tough and bitter outer case that needs to be removed before using. Once revealed, there is a bright, inner bean which is sweet and full of taste. They are a good source of fibre, high in protein, iron and zinc, great in a variety of dishes. Simply served blanched or lightly sautéed in butter as a side dish to meat, in a salad or for something different, try mashing them.

## LIFE CYCLE OF BROAD BEANS



### When to plant

1. Broad beans are a cool season crop, so plant anytime in autumn to early winter, March to June in cooler and temperate areas. They are frost hardy, however, if it's too cold, they may not produce flowers and pods until the spring.
2. In the sub-tropic region, broad beans may or may not work, depending on location and climate. They do not grow in the tropic region.

Check with hardware or garden centres to find out the varieties that will suit your location.

### Location

- Broad beans are ideally planted in the same position where a summer crop such as tomatoes would have been harvested. They prefer the same sunny position and will replenish the soil with nitrogen.
- Although broad beans are self-supporting, it is best to stake many varieties. If not supported, the plant may fall to the ground, when they become top heavy with pods.
- Plant in a position away from strong winds as they can be damaged easily.
- They are great in pots, as they can be moved around to catch the sun.
- Companion plants for broad beans include kale, lettuce, carrots, celery, pansies and nasturtiums

### Soil

Broad beans prefer a good, well-drained soil.

Prepare the soil by adding plenty of compost and organic manure. For a no-dig option, consider **Seasol Liquid Compost**.

The pH of the soil should be around 6.0 to 7.5. If the pH is below 6.0 add a handful of lime to the soil.

To boost the soil, add **Seasol Plant + Soil Booster**, before planting.

Water in well and if possible, let the soil rest for a week or so.



**Seasol**<sup>®</sup>

\*Check application rates on product labels or go to the Seasol website.

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# Growing Broad Beans



## 1. Sowing seeds



- Soak broad bean seeds overnight in a mixture of **Seasol** in water. Seeds have a hard coating so this helps to soften them and improves germination rates.
- Seeds can be sown directly into the ground or seed trays and later transferred.
- In the ground, to give plants more support, sow seeds in double rows about 30cm apart.
- Make a trench about 5cm deep and stagger the beans about 15cm apart in each row, depending on variety. Bushy varieties will need greater spacing. Cover lightly with soil.
- Support beans by placing a pole or stake at each end and at intervals of about 1 metre in between. Tie a taut piece of strong between each pole.
- In trays put 1-2 seeds in each single cell and sow to a depth of 5cm.
- Water in well with a Seasol as it helps increase seed germination rates (mix 30mL of concentrate per 9 litres of water).
- Don't water again until seeds germinate. Overwatering can cause seeds to rot.

## 3. Baby broad bean seedlings



- About two weeks after the seed leaves have opened, the first bean leaves will appear.
- Thin out seedlings as required for spacing. If broad beans are planted too close together, they may compete for nutrients and sunlight, affecting growth and development.
- Broad bean seedlings can fix nitrogen into the soil, so any fertiliser applied to them should be low in nitrogen and higher in potassium.
- Apply a fertiliser such as **PowerFeed PRO SERIES Roses and Flowers** every couple of weeks. This fertiliser is low in nitrogen (leafy growth) and higher in potassium (flower and pod development). Mix 20mL of concentrate per 9 litres of water and increase to 50mL of concentrate per 9 litres of water as the beans develop.



## 2. First growth



- Seeds will start to emerge out of the soil within a few weeks depending on temperature.
- Use a heating pad indoors for faster germination times.
- Check soil moisture daily, but don't overwater. Apply **Seasol** weekly to promote strong root development and healthy growth
- When bean sprout, they only have two leaves. These are the seedling leaves that look like two fat hearts on either side of the stem.

## 4. Broad bean seedlings ready for transplant



- When transplanting your own seedlings, they should be about 10-15cm high. Be careful with young shoots and roots as they can be easily damaged. Plant to the depth of the bean plug.
- When transplanting purchased seedlings, plant to a depth of the punnet.
- Follow bean and row spacing, as well as support (stakes or poles) instructions as described in 1. Sowing seeds.
- Continue to apply **Seasol** regularly every week to the young seedlings to help give them a kick-start to life and reduce transplant shock.



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## 5. Broad bean plant growth



- The rates at which beans grow depend on the variety and climatic condition. Broad bean stems are strong and upright. As the plants grow taller attach the stems to the twine or string in between the stakes for support.
- Broad beans need regular, deep watering for healthy, productive growth. The soil must be moist, but not over wet.
- Apply a layer of mulch such as sugar cane mulch or pea straw to keep the soil warm and moist.
- Remove weeds as they appear, as they will compete for space and nutrients.
- Continue to apply **Seasol** and **PowerFeed PRO SERIES Roses & Flowers** every couple of weeks for strong healthy growth and to stimulate and enhance flower development.

## 6. Broad bean flower growth



- Broad beans set flowers about 12 to 14 weeks after planting depending on the variety. The flowers will produce a vibrant sometimes fragrant display of blooms. Flower colour will vary depending on the variety. Most common colour is white with black markings, but also look out for crimson and chocolate.
- Water deeply and regularly during the flowering stage to ensure flower development.
- Flowers falling off or not forming properly can be due to a lack of soil moisture or the temperature being too high.
- Pinch outgrowth after the first flowers have set pods, as this will encourage further pods to set.



## 7. Harvesting broad beans



- Broad beans can be harvested in two ways, depending on culinary requirements.
- Harvest, young, immature bean pods like French beans, when they are around 7.5cm long, then cook and eat whole.
- To eat the beans shelled, leave them on the plant longer until the pods are well filled, and the seeds are still soft. The scar on the edge of the bean should be white or green, if it's black, it's passed its best and could be tough and chewy.
- Harvest regularly to encourage a long and bumper crop. After harvest, leave the plants in the ground for as long as possible. This will allow the plant's roots to put nitrogen back into the soil.
- To save seeds at the end of harvest for next years crop, let the pods dry out. Shell the beans and let them dry out further. Check for any diseased or irregular shaped seeds and discard. Store in a jar or envelope in a cool, dry area.

### Things to watch out for...

- Some broad bean varieties are more susceptible to disease than others. Check plant variety information for problems before planting.
- Aphids attack new broad bean growth so check plants regularly and spray with water or use a soap spray.
- Fungal diseases such as rust and chocolate spot can occur in humid conditions. In areas where this is likely, plant beans further apart to allow good air circulation.

