

“No one in Africa should ever go hungry.”

<https://worldrenew.net/blog/no-one-in-africa-should-ever-go-hungry>

Growing Jack beans

A cover crop that fertilises and protects the soil and can also provide food.

A Jack bean cover crop is usually sown in order to fertilise depleted soil.

This is best done, if possible **without ploughing**, to minimise soil destruction from its exposure to sunshine and/or heavy rain. Any weeds must be flattened.

Other crops can be sown in the cover crop but this should be limited for several seasons.

This special cover crop prevents weeds from growing and minimises pests and diseases in food crops. Jack beans, being noxious when mature, deter both wandering animals and disease-producing pests such as Fall army worm and even locusts!

Jack bean pods can be eaten after cooking when young but later the mature beans need careful cooking. If JB's are unavailable Mucuna (velvet beans) can be sown instead Visit;

https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/15173/De_Villiers_EJD.pdf;jsessionid=997B4315E0FFC5F631091F6EC435B771?sequence=1



Jack bean seeds should be sown in straight lines about ½ metre apart to avoid overcrowding



Jack beans with green pods. Later on pods go brown and beans inside are toxic and need treatment before cooking!

When other food is essential sow a legume such as marama bean, bambara groundnut, cowpea, pigeon pea, yambean, and lablab alongside the jack bean plants.

Do not forget to save some Jack beans for the next season's planting!

When food is very short one can eat the leaves of Jack Bean plants!

Leaves can be picked only two weeks after sowing (**some must be left to keep the plant growing**) and then a few weeks later producing edible pods. If the pods are left to mature the bean seeds can be eaten or sold. However these mature beans are toxic and require careful treatment and cooking! Ask for advice.

The most comprehensive health survey of Jack beans is found at:

<https://www.healthbenefitstimes.com/jack-beans/>

Corona Virus and Locusts

Where people are threatened with starvation it is important to harvest beans differently! Whether Jack bean, or any other bean, (like cowpea) one can start picking some leaves when very young! They are best cooked to remove possible toxins!

Later pick the pods when they are only pencil thick and more pods will be produced thus increasing the overall bean harvest.

In recent (2020) locust attacks Jack beans were the only crop not attacked!