

Allotment Forestry

BEANPOLES AND PEASTICKS



There is no better indicator of how remote we have become from our environment than the import of twigs, in the form of bamboo from China, to support runner beans. This leaflet describes how to buy and use locally grown beanpoles and peasticks in the garden so that at the very least we can leave the bamboo in China for the Pandas!

RUNNER BEAN SUPPORTS

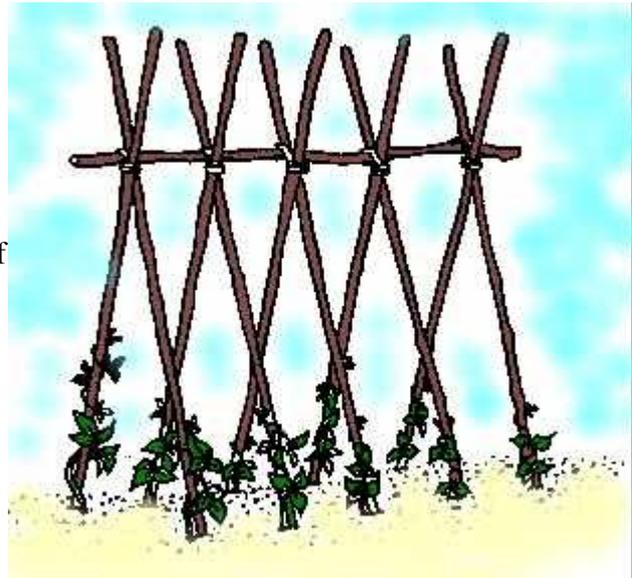
Runner bean supports should be erected prior to sowing or planting, if it is done when the beans are already growing the roots may be damaged. The minimum recommended size for the poles is 8' x "T" diameter and if looked after properly they will give five or more years use. Above 2" diameter poles get difficult to push into the ground. Plant or sow the beans on the outside of poles. The supports will be hidden by the mature beans.

Wigwams

Four poles, in a square, or six poles, in a circle, set 18"-24" apart. Garden twine or wire is used to tie the poles together near the top (as shown on the front of this leaflet).

Crossed Poles

Seven pairs of crossed poles with one horizontal support will cover an 8' run. The space between the rows of poles should be 24" with 12" between each crossed pair. Erect the two outside pairs first and then attach the horizontal support, fix it with garden twine or wire. The remaining pairs of poles are then erected.



Looking after your beanpoles

As it ages Hazel becomes very brittle and thin poles are liable to snap. All beanpoles are susceptible to decay although Sweet Chestnut which is naturally durable will last longer. Once you have finished with the beanpole for the season store it off damp ground, under cover and in a dry atmosphere to prevent them from rotting. Stout beanpoles will last 5 or more years if stored properly.

PEA & SWEETPEA SUPPORTS

Hazel is the traditional peastick however most woody twigs can be used with Birch especially useful. Peasticks rarely last more than one season.



Peasticks

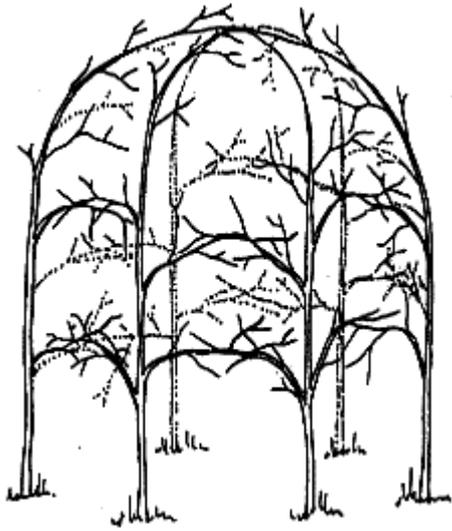
When the pea or sweetpea seedlings have developed tendrils, push 4'-5' peasticks in either side of the drill leaving 4"-6" between each pair of peasticks. Keep as upright as possible. Twenty peasticks will give a run of 3'-4'.

Old peasticks spread about are invaluable for keeping cats off vegetable beds. Broken beanpoles can be used for flower or tomato stakes.

Charcoal can be made in a oil drum from redundant beanpoles and they can always be used for kindling to light the fire. Nothing need be wasted!

Victorian Sweet Pea Support

Set six 5' peasticks with a balanced branch structure 9"–10" apart in a circle of 20" (50cm) diameter. Starting from the bottom tier of branches and working to the top weave together and fix with garden twine or wire the adjacent branches so as to form a cage like structure. Bend and tie the tops together finishing neatly.



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