



Know What You Grow!



Fava Beans

Scientific Name: *Vicia faba*

The fava bean is a giant vetch plant.

Recommended Varieties:

There are no recommended varieties. However, one variety that is relatively unique to our state is *Vicia faba L.*

Fava bean varieties are small or large seed types. Large-seeded varieties bear 1–2 pods at each node, small-seeded types produce from 2–5 pods.

Common Pest(s):

Aphid: Use soap spray; control ants with sticky barrier.

Bean weevil: Remove and destroy plants after harvest.

Resource: UC Integrated Pest Management

Growing Information

Cool Season Plant

Fava beans are quite hardy in cool climates and are often substituted for lima beans. They do not grow well in warm weather.

Ideal Planting Window

Interior Valleys: September-October

Desert Valleys: October-November

Growing Guidance

Space rows 1.5 to 2.5 feet apart. Sow seeds 1 inch deep and space 4 to 5 inches apart. Thin to 8 to 10 inches apart. Plants produce bush growth 2 to 4 feet high.

Further information: USDA



Interesting Facts

Fava beans are commonly planted to improve soil. Like all legumes, they have nodules on the roots, containing rhizobium bacteria, which “fix” airborne nitrogen, allowing it to replenish usable nitrogen in the soil.



Fava beans are also called Horse, Broad, Windsor, English Dwarf Bean, Tick, Pigeon, Bell, Haba, Feve and Silkworm beans.

It is similar in size to the lima bean and is native to the Mediterranean region, especially Italy and Iran. It is one of the oldest cultivated plants known, with its culture extending back to prehistoric times.

Warning: Some people of Mediterranean origin, primarily male, have a genetic trait (enzyme deficiency) that causes a severe allergic reaction to fava beans. People of this descent should sample the beans in small quantities at first. Fava plant pollen in the respiratory tract also affects these people.

[UCCE-Small Farms](#)

[Santa Clara Master Gardeners](#)

Contact Information



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Nutritional Information

Nutritional Value

One cup of boiled mature fava beans contains 12.9 grams of protein, 9.2 grams of fiber and 33.4 grams of carbohydrates. Fava beans contain vitamin K, vitamin B6, zinc, copper, iron, and magnesium. One cup of cooked beans has 187 calories.

[Further Nutritional Information](#)

Recipe



Garlic and Lemon Fava Beans

- 1 cup fava beans shelled
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 tablespoon flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- black pepper to taste

1. Shell pods; remove fava beans. In a large pot add beans, cover with water, bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for 3 minutes. Drain beans, return to pot, and add cold water to cover beans. After 5 minutes, drain and remove outer skins. Discard skins.

2. In a skillet, heat oil to medium-low, add garlic and sauté about 1 minute. Add beans and parsley. Continue sautéing for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, drizzle beans with lemon juice, salt, and pepper to taste.

Recipe: and Photo: [SkinnyMs](#)

Images: Santa Clara and Sonoma Master Gardeners; New Mexico State University

Additional Resources: Sunset Best Western Garden Book, 2012