

SEVEN YEAR LIMA

Madagascar Bean, Painted Lady, Tropical Lima, Haricot De Madagascar

Phaseolus lunatus

Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Origin

The Seven-Year Lima is believed to have originated in Central America. The name comes from its ability to remain productive for several years. ECHO seeds originally came from the Asveldt Ranch in Mwenzi, Zimbabwe where the Seven-Year Lima is planted around houses and grows atop roofs of homes away from foraging goats.

Uses

The unique quality of this bean is its ability to smother and suppress weeds while providing continual forage for animals, beans for human consumption, a perennial dense cover crop for tropical dry regions and a green manure that adds nitrogen to the soil. Seven-Year Lima bean is characterized by vigorous vining growth that quickly develops into a thick mat about 2' high

Common Names

- French
 - pois de sept ans
 - pois du cap
 - fève créole
- Spanish
 - Frijol De Lima De Siete Años (Frijol Luna)
 - Haricot De Lima

Cultivation

Seven-Year Lima seeds should be planted directly into the prepared soil as it does not like transplanting. Cold temperatures can hinder germination. Sow the seeds about 3-6 cm deep and about 60 cm apart. Flowering begins 60-90 days after sowing. The plant prefers a dry, frost-free growing season but if frosted, will die back and regrow. Its growth is slowed down by cool weather. It is fairly drought resistant and requires light, well-drained soil with a pH of 6-7. It is tolerant of a wide variety of soil types. The beans can be planted in mounds and trellised or broadcast to produce a thick ground cover. Before the wet season, the vine should be pruned back. Its growth may decline but is rejuvenated after the rainy season is over. The reason for pruning is to get a healthy flush of new growth to withstand periods of intense rain and humidity.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The mat can be trimmed back and fed to animals as a mix with other forages. Occasional pruning is recommended to stimulate new vigorous growth and rejuvenate the mat. The ground can be completely covered in 60-75 days when sown every square-foot and temperatures are warm. Pods are produced continually throughout its life providing multiple harvests. Dry Seven-Year Lima beans are ready for picking after 7-9 months. The seeds are easy to collect and can be kept in cool, dry storage for many years.

Pests and Diseases

It is extremely hardy and vigorous. Seven-Year Lima bean is susceptible to root-knot nematodes though it does continue to persist with infected roots.

Cooking and Nutrition

The Seven-Year Lima beans can be eaten as a pulse. Beans should be soaked 4-6 hours before cooking. The beans can be boiled and water discarded before eating. The beans and leaves should never be eaten raw. The Seven-Year Lima beans are a nice protein addition to soups, stews and casseroles. After it is boiled and cooked, it can be refrigerated and eaten cold.