

## Bean Fort Fun

All Ages

Children love forts and hide-outs all their own. A fort can be a quiet place to think and dream. Grow imaginations, as well as beans, with a bean fort.

To make a children's bean fort, start by building the frame. You will need 6-10 poles and a length of cord. The poles can be any material but keep safety in mind as the children may knock the structure over. Good choices include bamboo poles, PVC pipe, thin dowel rods or hollow aluminum poles. Avoid materials like solid metal or heavy wooden pieces.

Poles 6-8 feet long work well or whatever length you decide. Your child should be able to stand up comfortably in the center. The diameter of your bean fort should be about 6 feet or whatever size is wide enough for your child to move around inside. The fort can be circular - forming a teepee or square- forming a pyramid.

Choose a spot that gets at least 5 hours of full sun. Mark out the diameter of the fort with a rope. Push or dig the poles into the ground so they angle toward the centre. Place them about 2 feet apart. Leave a wider space for a door. Tie the poles together at the top so that they cannot come apart or fall down.

Work the soil around each pole. If the soil is poor add compost, beans like rich soil. Plant the bean seeds to either side of the poles about 2 inches deep. Plant extra and thin out plants if needed. Choose pole beans (bush beans will not climb), Scarlet runner beans are popular. You can use all one type of bean or mix them for some variety. For a little colour, add a flowering vine like the edible nasturtium to a few poles. Use care in selecting flowering plants that are accessible to young children, not all are safe. Water the seeds well. There is plenty of learning and fun in gardening together.

The bean seeds should sprout in 7-10 days. Once tall enough, gently tie the beans loosely to the poles. They will climb from there on their own. You can tie string between the poles for added coverage and support. Pinch the tops of the bean plants to force them to branch out and grow more densely. Keep the plants well watered. Harvest the beans regularly to keep the vines producing and healthy.



[https://www.instagram.com/p/CAiXKojlUPH/?utm\\_source=ig\\_embed](https://www.instagram.com/p/CAiXKojlUPH/?utm_source=ig_embed)



<http://www.joyfultoddlers.com/time-to-play>

**Tip:** There are lots of ways to eat beans - fresh of the vine is the yummiest. They are easy to freeze so you can serve them in the winter and bring back summer memories. Try pickling them for a tasty treat.

Fresh bean recipes at <https://www.cookinglight.com/food/in-season/green-bean-recipes>

