



Bean Box Goods Autumn 2025

"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
-Groucho Marx

Happy Autumn! This unprecedented drought that afflicted most of the Northeast this summer had an upside for drying down dry beans in the field for their harvest window.

At our home farm in Warren, VT, we ended up receiving flood waters in May after an uphill culvert blew out in a localized storm that delivered a crazy amount of water over the course of just an hour. Our barn and some lower-lying fields were affected, but we were able to still get our other fields planted and have since built up a robust berm, sediment forebay, and overflow pond to safeguard us from future such increasingly-common events.

It seems with each passing year it's getting increasingly complex to eek out a land-based living, and increasingly important to seek out a crop mix and land use patterns that can accommodate extreme weather and novel pest pressures. As a subscriber to our Bean Box, you are playing a helpful role in supporting farmers in our network have reliable markets for their beans and grains in an otherwise unreliable context. So thank you for that!

In this same vein, I'd like to highlight some increasingly popular agricultural practices that bring me a lot of hope. The concept of agroforestry may be familiar to some, but the gist is it's the introduction of trees to fields of annual crops or livestock grazing fields. The benefits are numerous for both farms' profitability and the environment. At our farm for example, we are in a

river valley and have lined the edges of our fields with perennials as diverse as full-sized cider apple trees, willows for basketry, chestnuts, and assorted fruits. If the river were to flood, we would likely lose our annual crops in some of these fields, but the tree crops could handle the pressure of most flood events, and would also help slow down the velocity of water and help to hold soil in place. These rows of tree crops are called 'alley's and if done right, can also provide habitat for insects and birds that can keep pest pressures at bay.

Here is a picture of our Flor de Mayo bean harvest from our agroforestry field. This field is a SARE grant-funded demonstration site in collaboration with Interlace Commons to show other small farms how to manage various types of alley cropping practices. We grow dry beans and corn for cornmeal between rows of dwarf cherry trees with rhubarb beneath them, Asian pear trees with currants between them, and peaches set out in rows with quince and more rhubarb. As they mature, the fruit harvest will be of equal or greater value as the beans and grain crops.



Here's a repeat link to a worthy [primer on cooking with beans](#). And you can view our recommendations for cooking with beans on our website [here](#).

If you've found any great such resources (printed or digital) please feel free to share them with me at joe@vermontbeancrafters.com

In this Box

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Organic Cannellini Beans, Morningstar Farm, VT
Organic Rojo Chiquito, Martens Farm, NY
Organic Pinto Beans, Martens Farm, NY
Organic Red Kidney Beans, Martens Farm, NY
Organic Green Lentils, Timeless, MT
Abenaki Flint Corn Cornmeal, Borderview Farms, VT

Org. Cannellini Beans



A lot of folks may have come to know cannellini through the cuisine of Italy (think pasta fagioli), but these likely originate from the lands around what is currently regarded as Argentina and work very well in a [locro](#) stew (as do lima beans). These specific beans were grown by Morningstar Farms in Glover, VT. Any white bean is difficult to grow in the Northeast due to our wetter autumns which can lead to the discoloration of the seed coats, so these beautiful beans are a real accomplishment!

I recently added some cooked cannellini to a pot of a simple [four-ingredient marinara](#) sauce made from the last round of our garden tomatoes, and even our toddler approved! They shine in any red sauce as much as any green sauce:

Peoples' Pesto

1-2 hours, 12 servings

Ingredients

1 lb (2 cups) dry cannellini beans
2 bunches basil (about 2 cups chopped)
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley (about 1 cup chopped)
2 cups olive oil
½ cup toasted sunflower seeds
1 teaspoons garlic powder
2 tablespoons sea salt
1 tablespoon white pepper
1 lemon's juice

First, [cook up your beans](#). Then coarsely chop your fresh herbs and then combine with the rest of ingredients. If you have a food processor, that'll make quick work of it all. A mortar and pestle also do a good job. I recommend browning the sunflower seeds first. Cook them a minute or two on medium-heat, stirring them often until they begin to brown and become aromatic. Remove from the heat before they begin to smoke. Cool before adding. Toss the pesto into the beans. They are good to go as is, but also can become a main course if spooned on top of polenta, grits, or pasta.

Org. Rojo Chiquito



Rojo Chiquito is a recent addition to the class of beans simply known as 'small red beans'. Plant breeders from Michigan and Washington state teamed up to make a disease-resistant bean with an up-right growing habit that would be better for northern US soils than many of the other small red beans, that are more typically grown in more southern climates and soils. These beans are also about 1/3 smaller on average than other small red beans in their class, and hold their shape and texture well, while making a richly flavored and hued stock. They are going to be a winner in any chili you make this summer or in the cool Autumn months just around the bend.

These were grown by Hanna and Peter Martens who are the generation following in the iconic footsteps of Mary Howell and Klaus Martens of Lakeview Organic Grains in Penn Yan NY. They grow an impressive variety of legumes and grains interspersed with cover crops and have a world class seed cleaning operation that gets utilized by other farms in the region.

Their family has been at the crest of the wave of organic grains and cover cropping for over thirty years now, and with recent investments they've made they are set up to be one of the cornerstones of organic agriculture in the Northeast for another thirty years at least.

Here is a chili recipe that calls these beans out by name: an Instant Pot-centered [Barbacoa and Rojo Chiquito Bean recipe](#) shared by India Tree.

The NYT has been putting out tons of bean recipes lately and recently sent out a red beans and rice [recipe](#). That said, hundreds abound, and if you aren't subscribed and don't want to deal with a paywall, check out this [Red Beans and Rice](#) by Adam Ragusea.

Organic Pinto Beans



The name pinto is derived from the verb *pintar* which means to paint. The subtle but gorgeous patterning on the seed coat can be more or less pronounced depending on how wet or dry a crop year was, but in both cases the patterns largely fades when cooked.

As much as I love less-ubiquitous beans, I end up eating black beans and pinto beans more than half of the time. They are so versatile and enjoyable, they end up being at the top of my rotation for a Sunday pot of beans that I'll cook off and cool in quart containers in the fridge for quick and easy weekday meals.

One of my favorite ways to eat pintos in these colder months is to brown a diced onion with some salt, a pinch of cumin and oregano, and one tablespoon each of avocado oil and butter in a six-inch cast iron pan. Once the beans come to a simmer, I add some shredded cheese (cheddar and/or Monterey jack), and bring the skillet to the table while it's still simmering and melty. You can use this skillet as a dip for chips, or spoon these as a topping to tacos, fajitas, arepas, or a rice bowl.

The Southern Foodways Alliance put together this great [short film](#) about Soup Beans, which pinto beans often play a starring role.

There are innumerable recipes out there for this dish, all similar and each subtly distinct. Here's just one easy Instant Pot/pressure cooker [recipe](#) from Eating Well that would work as well with most any similarly-sized bean.

Organic Kidney Beans



One of our key partners for more 'classic' beans like pintos and kidneys, with the occasional specialty offering like NY-grown Winter Lentils, is the Martens of Martens Farm and Seneca Bean and Grain. They are central movers and shakers in the Northeast Food Shed. Many organic farmers buy their cover crop seed and animal feed from Peter's parents at Lakeview Organic Grains, pioneers of larger-scale organic grains in New York who have been big on sharing their lessons learned along the way with the community.

Peter is at the helm of the next generation and has decided to focus more on food-grade beans and grains. They built a state-of-the-art facility a number of years ago and are now expanding on this facility where they process all of their own grain and bean crops, while also opening up their line to custom process for other area growers at reasonable rates. It's all very inspiring.

Bean Box is one more way these beans get out into the world, and I do feel like the world is a slightly better place each time someone boils up a pot of beans from places like this, helping to support the sort of community-building and soil stewardship that these folks exemplify.

So, what to do with these kidney beans? How about a classic [Pot of Beans](#)? Carla use butter beans in this recipe, but the method works with any kind, and the emphasis on salt, fat and time is the key point. The charred lemon, breadcrumbs and aioli make for nice touches. "Buy a good bean; treat it nicely."

Organic Green Lentils



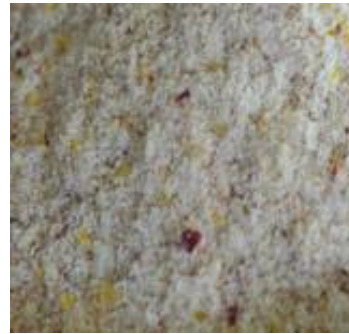
The New York Times put out an [article](#) this past week that heralds Lentils as a superfood. They, like all legumes really, have been getting some much-deserved hype for years now. It's great to see more media touting how, "they are exceptionally rich in nutrients and support digestive, metabolic and cardiovascular health. Fiber, protein, antioxidants, iron, folate...they got it all. One new-to-me factoid I got out of this piece was that a squeeze of lemon can help increase iron absorption. It's no wonder so many traditional preparations of beans and lentils involve an amount of citrus or vinegar. The article links to a few solid lentil recipes, with this [Spinach and Feta Lentil Bowl](#) from Ali Slagle feeling particularly striking this month as spinach replaces mesclun and head lettuce in the fields.

We stock over a half-dozen different lentils from Timeless in Montana. The Black Beluga and French Green hold their shape fairly well and provide a toothsome lentil that is more versatile in grain bowls and salads as well as stews.



Here's a picture of a field of winter lentils we planted in Warren, VT in September, coplanted with oats and straddling an alley crop of young aronia berry bushes.

Abenaki Flint Corn Cornmeal



We have been collaborating with the organization Abenaki Helping Abenaki for close to a decade now. Among the programs we do together is host and operate a stone mill for them in our commercial kitchen that grinds VT-grown dent and flint corns into cornmeal that we help distribute to community members. We're working on expanding this milling operation into a retail-ready packaged product that would generate program income for the tribal organization.

The corn in these bags is an Abenaki flint corn with yellow and red kernels that makes for a beautiful cornmeal with deep flavor. It's a medium coarse grind and a good general use cornmeal. I add a couple of tablespoons to most recipes that use wheat flour, adding a more interesting flavor and texture to pancakes, pizza crusts, and pie shells alike.

I'd recommend giving the following recipe a try. It's a sweet-savory batter that works well as either a corn muffin or cornbread. I've been enjoying baking it off in a cast iron skillet, and brushing the top with melted butter as it comes out of the oven, then sprinkling with a large-flaked finishing salt. It would pair well with chili for dinner, fried eggs for breakfast, or just griddled and lathered with jam for a hearty snack.

Chief Don Stevens Family's Cornbread Recipe

1 ½ Cups of Cornmeal
½ Cup All Purpose Flour
1/3 cup Maple Syrup
½ teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 egg
1 cup buttermilk
¼ cup canola oil

Mix drys. Mix wets. Combine. Bake at 400F for approximately 17 minutes, until golden brown. Makes 6 large muffins or fills one 6" round pan.