



Bean Box Goods Summer 2026

The welfare of each is bound up in beans for all.
-Helen Keller [edited]

Bean Crafters operates out of the valley floor of the Mad River. The soil we stand on, that the beans here grown in, is made from the rock and life of the mountains that line this valley to the east and west. The same winds that cause the aspens along the river to dance, the same river waters that gently bobs swimmers along in summer, have bit by bit through time unknowable borrowed from these towering mountains to make these foothills and this valley floor deeply green and solid.

There is nothing quite like a river valley to make it clear both that nothing is forever, and everything is connected. We still have beavers near us whose ancestors shaped this place as much as the receding glaciers. This farm has been at this site longer than Route 100, which is its eastern property line. The uphill watersheds still hunger to reach the river in broad ribbons above and below ground, but have to make their way through just a couple narrow culverts. Rain events around here have tended to be more sporadic over recent years, and when they do come, they involve larger amounts of water falling in shorter amounts of time. This has been causing storm surges that damage fields and structures around the farm. We've been putting in earthworks, berms, and overflow ponds to help this water slow, spread, and sink back into the water table without damaging any fields or buildings.

One of the biggest considerations when repairing and modernizing the old dairy barn that will house our improved seed cleaning facility was how to get this 100+ year-old structure to weather the weather better. We ended up deciding to take the plunge and raise the elevation of the building several feet, bringing in several hundred yards of fill and gravel to get the floor of our seed cleaning facility out of the 100 year flood plain and above a level that storm surges from uphill could do damage to.



The old 'foundation' being pulled out after the jacking up of the 3,800 sq ft of barn

This once-in-a-century project should be completed in time to process the 2026 harvest. Your subscribing to this Bean Box program is one more layer to our business that gives us the confidence to pursue this daunting project with gusto. We will be able to aggregate, clean, store, and distribute dozens, if not hundreds, of acres of more bean, seed, and grain crops both for our own product lines and as a custom cleaner helping area farms bring their own crops to market themselves. In the meantime, just know you are part of something bigger, and that you are appreciated for your help in the seachange towards a more diverse, direct, and sane agriculture.



The new floor, interior supports, braces, and foundation wall

Now, onto the beans in this Bean Box!

I had been formatting these booklets in a two-column format for years to make it more compact for print. My sense over time is that most people aren't printing these out and instead viewing them online or as a downloaded PDF, so I'm switching it up to a single page-wide column this time around. That should make viewing on devices easier, without impairing the printability much. Feedback is welcome.

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

To start, here's a repeat link to a worthy [primer on cooking with beans](#).

And as a reminder, you can view our recommendations for cooking with beans on our website here: <https://www.vermontbeancrafters.com/dry-beans>

In this Box

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Organic Jacobs Cattle, Morningstar Farm, VT
Mayocoba Beans, Carlson-Arbogast Farm, MI
Organic Chickpeas, Ramona Farms, AZ
Organic Flor de Mayo Beans, Cloud Water Farm, VT
Organic Harvest Gold Lentils, Timeless Foods, MT
Organic Ruby Red Pop Corn, Hurricane Flats, VT

Organic Jacob's Cattle Beans (*P. Vulgaris*)



Slow Food has a [nice write-up](#) on Jacob's Cattle beans, which are also known as NY Trout beans in some circles. The mottled markings on these beans are always such a joyful thing to me. When presenting beans to elementary school classes these are the ones that get kids to stop and 'oooh' over the beans like they're pretty little gems, or maybe exotic bugs. There are many different strains of these beans, the ratio of the red splotches to the white are all over the map and the deepness of the red can be highly variable as well based on how much rain a field gets in a given year and other factors.

These Jacob's Cattle are from Seth and Jeanette Johnson of Morningstar Farm in Glover VT, perhaps the best bean growers in New England! The markings on their beans are distinct from other growers we source from in the Northeast. I have come to think of the nuanced differences in these markings as the fingerprints of each farm and season's vintage. These beans have been traced back at least as far as the 1700's and have very likely been cultivated in the Northeast for much much longer than that. The Abenaki word for beans is "[adebakwal](#)".

These are a great stew bean, and contribute savory flavor and starch to a broth. Depending on where you grew up, these may be your classic baked bean, or you may have never seen them before in your life!

I enjoy eating these on crusty toast in the morning. I'll reheat a ladle-full with their broth in a little six-inch skillet while my bread is toasting, smear some butter or glug some olive oil on the toast while it's still hot and empty the skillet over the toast. I top with a dash of apple cider vinegar or a lemon wedge, coarse salt, and [gomasio](#).



Here is a picture of the 2026 Jacob's Cattle bean field taken by Seth this year.

Mayocoba Beans (*P. Vulgaris*)



These beans (like most every other bean) go by many names. Whatever you call them: Mayacoba or Mayocoba, Peruano or Canario, or even Sulfur Bean, I think you will be enamored with these. They are vastly under-utilized, at least up here in the Northeast.

Mayocoba beans cook down to a dreamy creamy steamy beany. They add rich starchy texture to any soup, and one of the simplest and most toddler-approved dishes you can do is simmer the cooked beans in a rimmed skillet with the fat of your choice, a pinch of salt, cumin, and oregano, and once the beans are bubbling shred some cheese on top and turn off the heat. This makes for a nice table presentation for a dip, or else is the vessel from which you can spoon beans onto tacos, into a burrito, or heap onto avocado toast.

I love these beans in a simple grain bowl application, served alongside a scoop of rice or quinoa and portions of whatever vegetables are in season. The vegetables can be oven-roasted or steamed with fresh cilantro or parsley on top.

While traditionally calling for ‘white beans’ I’d recommend trying your hand at making the Moroccan bean and tomato stew, [Loubia](#) with these. They lend a great light starchy body to a stock and their delicate texture melts away nicely alongside the stewed tomatoes. Since it’s peak tomato season around here I like doubling down on them whenever I can. I’ll stew slicer tomatoes in the stew, and then top the serving bowl with a cherry tomatoes that have been poached in olive oil until slightly browned and bursting into the oil. If you’re sopping up the stew with some crusty bread, like [Khobz](#) (or else a baguette, ciabatta; even pita or roti, etc), these first tomato-oil bites are a revelation. This can be a side or a main course.

This particular batch of mayocoba beans was grown in Central Michigan by [Carlson-Arbogast Farm](#). This family farm has been growing beans for more than 140 years, and is now run by Fran, who is profiled in this video [here](#). These beans are a comparatively thinner-skinned bean with a soft body that makes them very much at home in any recipe where a pinto bean would be called for, especially creamy refried beans.

Organic Chickpeas (*Cicer Arietinum*)



Chickpeas, or garbanzos, have become so popular and ubiquitous now that hummus, roasted chickpea snacks, and (maybe to a lesser extent) chana masala have achieved ubiquity in grocery stores and restaurants of all stripes. It's important to note, they aren't all the same. There are the Kabuli style which are larger and tan-colored. And then there are Desi, which are smaller and darker (they actually can be black, brown or green!). These latter make up the majority of global chickpea production, but are less-common in the US as the Kabuli chickpeas predominate in the cuisines around the Mediterranean Sea.

These beans are grown without chemical inputs at Ramona Farms, operated by Ramona Button, who is farming beans and grains on her ancestral land as an indigenous woman in what is now known as Arizona. While most beans in the Northeast are planted in May or June and harvested in October or November, these beans are dry-land farmed in the desert, meaning they receive no irrigation beyond what the acequias bring to the fields. They are planted in the early winter and harvested in Spring, just when we would be planting beans here in Vermont.

Chickpeas are known as “kalvash” in the language of the Akimel O’Odham people. The quality of their crops are impeccable. We had sourced chickpeas from numerous different places before coming across these. While there are some cheaper domestic sources of chickpeas in the Palouse region of the US, we are focused on quality and de-commodifying these important foodways and are happy to stick with these.

No matter the particulars, all chickpeas are delicious and a nutrition powerhouse. Each cup contains about 15 grams of protein matched with over 12 grams of fiber. Legumes are absolutely epic food.

If you want to try something other than hummus, New York Times Cooking went on a tear with loads of solid chickpea recipes over the last year. But here are some quick references that have caught my imagination lately:

Revithia is a ‘souper’ simple Greek soup that comes together quickly and incorporates lemon in a way that makes this satiating protein-laden meal feel brighter and lighter for summer eating.

<https://thebeanbites.com/greek-chickpea-soup-revithia/>

We utilize an InstantPot regularly for the family-style staff meals we do for our staff. For a whole series of Instant Pot-friendly dishes centered on chickpeas, here you go:

<https://thebeanbites.com/best-instant-pot-chickpeas-recipes/>

Flor de Mayo Beans (P. Vulgaris)



These Flor de Mayo beans were grown at the small farm in the Mad River Valley where Bean Crafters operates out of. These are a beautiful and delicious bean that are very popular south of the border but hard to find up in the Northeast. We found they grew and yielded quite well. They have a slight vining habit that can make mechanical cultivation tricky in organic management systems, but we made it work with a couple of rounds of hand-weeding after the tractor-based cultivation ceased to be viable in late summer amidst the vines. A lot of the more common beans have a growth habit that allows them to be direct-combined. As in, you can just drive a combine down a field to scoop up beans like black beans, pintos, navies, etc. A lot of the heirloom varieties, including these, either need to be hand-harvested, or else a suite of anachronistic and hard-to-come-by equipment needs to be used. It takes a lot of healthy soil and hearty toil to bring these beans to you.



On the left is the field of Flor de Mayo getting its first cultivation in the agroforestry field at Cloud Water Farm. The beans are rotated through these fields with heirloom corn and cover crops. The edges of the fields are lined with perennial fruit trees.

On the right is a close-up picture of the cultivation toolbar being pulled through the beans. Rather than use herbicides, we periodically pull specialized hardware to keep weeds at bay, and hill up soil around the beans to better support their growth.

While you can successfully incorporate these anywhere you would put pinto beans, here are a couple recipes worth giving a whirl:

[Frijolles de olla](#) *Note:* If you don't have *epazote* in your pantry, you can sub in oregano.

[Rosita Beans](#), perfect in an InstantPot

Harvest Gold Lentils (*Lens Culinaris*)



These lovely lentils are from the legendary farmers of Timeless Seeds in Montana. These farmers have spent the last couple decades revolutionizing agriculture in parts of Montana that had been large monocrops of chemically-managed conventional wheat for much of the 20th century. On their website, they have this to say about them: Harvest Golds Lentils cook very quickly and are well suited for delicate soups, as a base ingredient for dips, or even as a protein-booster in baked goods like cookies and cakes. Try them cooked in stir fry or as a quick side dish with a splash of olive oil, balsamic vinegar, a dash of salt and pepper, and chopped chives. A pot of them cooks in about 10 minutes! These lentils are decorticated; that's just a fancy way of saying they have had their skins removed.

Our friend Kunja grew up on an ashram in India making large meals for the community there. He's an excellent cook who gets the benefit of having family send him spices and herbs from home to here in VT, along with an array of daals that utterly humbled me. I thought I knew beans and lentils, but hyper-specific types of daals, and lentils processed (split, chopped, pre-cooked and dried, etc) for specific meals was a revelation for me. We have a big gathering of friends on the farm every summer and this past year Kunja used these very golden lentils to cook a big pot of [sambar](#), which is what I'm recommending you do with them.

I've shared this before, but here is a great short piece by [Dan of Cooks Illustrated](#) into the why rice and lentils are such a nutritious and delicious pairing. Hint: the essential amino acids of tryptophan and lysine are at play.

Organic Ruby Red Popping Corn



Ash and Antoine are the talented growers behind this beautiful ruby red popping corn. They grow meticulously-managed diversified vegetables, and also specialize in colorful popcorns. They grow a couple varieties of dry beans for us in rotation with their market garden crops and corn. To-date we've carried soldier beans, yellow eyes, and oland beans from their farm. We have asked them to grow soldier beans for us again this year since there is currently a bit of a national shortage going on with those. So stay tuned for those later this fall or winter.

I grew up with an electric popcorn popper, and they work great. I haven't had one in many moons though, so I always cook popping corn in either a cast iron or enamel dutch oven with a lid.

For every $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of popcorn kernels I put 1 tablespoon of a high heat oil like avocado oil in the bottom of a 9" heavy-bottomed lidded pot (the cooked volume increases dramatically, so be sure to not put too many kernels in or you'll have a hard time getting them all to pop). Set your burner to medium or medium-low so that the kernels don't burn before popping. I pick up the pot with oven mitts and shake it all every minute or less once I begin to hear some initial popping. We know it's all done when the popping reduces to one pop every five seconds or more. It's important to transfer the popped corn as soon as possible to a separate container and quickly stir in your butter or fat of choice—if any—and then sprinkle salt once coated and still-warm for best adhesion. The biggest risk in this whole process is burning the popcorn, so keep the heat a bit lower than you might think, and agitate the pot often.

While waiting to hear the first popping sounds, I'll melt a half stick of butter in a little six-inch pan. (you could also use coconut oil instead) to prepare a drizzle for when the kernels are done popping. You don't want to add the butter until transferring the fully-popped kernels to a separate bowl for salting and seasoning, as it can burn in the pot too easily. If you wanted to add any other flavoring to the popcorn, you can add it to the melted, simmered butter. You can take it in any direction from garam masala, to garlic and rosemary, to cinnamon and maple syrup with this approach.