



**NOURISHING
SINCE 2009**

Bean Box Goods
Summer 2022

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”

-Annie Dillard

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

King of the Early from Cedar Circle Farm, VT
Adzuki from Ferris Organic Farms, MI
Black Beluga Lentils from Timeless Foods, MT
Rojo Chiquito from Martens Farm, NY
Mayacoba from Carlson-Arbogast, MI
Yellow Peas from Aurora Mill and Farm, ME
Sugar Kelp from Spring Tide, ME

For a PDF version of this booklet go to vermontbeancrafters.com/bean-box

The range of diversity in edible legumes is humbling. The twenty-four different beans we include in these boxes over the course of a year, and that's just a drop in the bucket. There are four different species of beans in this quarter's Bean Box.

As of last year there were only about 8 varieties of dry beans regularly commercially available in the Northeast, and perhaps two-dozen in the US, out of literally thousands of cultivars that indigenous seed stewards developed over the preceding millennia. We have since seen Winter Lentils, Rojo Chiquito, Cayenne, Black Coco, Tiger's Eye, and King of the Early become more available. They still sell out early, but their acreage is increasing, and there are more varieties on the way.

This Bean Box subscription program is one of several forces helping to increase our region's capacity to support the gradual broadening of genetic diversity of beans grown in our foodshed. [Here is an article from Civil Eats](#) on recent attempts by some other folks we work with trying to grow chickpeas in NY.

If you have a bean variety you would like to see included in a future Bean Box, bean seed to share, or would like to receive some bean seed to grow out yourself, please reach out to us. Email beanbox@vermontbeancrafters.com.

King of the Early Beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*)



These beans were grown by Shawn Grenier and the team of the Willing Hands Garden at [Cedar Circle Farm](#), an educational and community-focused farm in the Upper Valley of Vermont, right on the banks of the Connecticut River.

King of the Early Beans get their namesake from being an early-maturing variety, which is an important attribute in Vermont due to the rainy late Falls that frequent the Northeast during the harvest window of dry beans. They are one of the better-performing Northeastern heirloom varieties in my experience. Right up there with soldier beans and yellow eyes, but not as commonly available. The mottling of these beans blushes out and becomes faint but still visible after cooking. They have a texture similar to cannellini and so can be used in similar applications.

I really like the recipes and Food Lab deep dives that J. Kenji Alt-Lopez has been contributing to the world. Try combining these beans with the Rojo Chiquito, also included in this Bean Box shipment in place of the kidneys and chickpeas recommended in [this vegetarian chili recipe](#) by J. Kenji.

I've also subbed these in place of cannellini beans in pasta fagioli and really liked the taste, texture, and what they contributed to the broth. This [Hank Shaw recipe for pasta fagioli](#) reminds me of the soup my grandma made growing up.

Adzuki Beans (*Vigna angularis*)



Though commonly referred to as adzuki *beans* these are a member of the *vigna* genus, so more closely related to peas (*vigna* is derived from *vinea*, or vine in latin) which speaks to their tendency, like with other peas, to send out tendrils from their semi-bush habit. These hail from Eastern Asia, and Japan in particular. Red-skinned adzuki are the most common, but there are also white, black, grey and mottled cultivars.

We sourced these adzuki beans from [Ferris Organic Farm](#) in Eaton Rapids MI, a beautiful, diversified family farm that also happens to be the first certified organic bean and grain cleaning facility in the Midwest back in the 1970's.

I've grown adzukis in the past with the explicit intention of making a fully Vermont-grown miso. I did make some small batches from that harvest, but the folks at Rhapsody Natural Foods and [South River Miso](#) do such a good job with their misos, that there is little point in us exploring commercial miso production. Making miso at home though is a fun and magical process, and is what I'm hoping you'll be inspired to do with these adzukis!

There is a significant amount of content online about how to make your own miso. If you would like to go this route, I recommend ordering some koji from [Rhapsody Natural Foods](#) in Cabot VT. They include miso recipes with every shipment. Just sub in adzuki beans 1:1 for soy beans. Here's an additional [miso how-to video](#).

If you're not into miso, adzuki are also extremely popular throughout Eastern Asia as a [sweet red bean paste, known as anko](#). Here's an [anko how-to video](#).

Black Beluga Lentils (*Lens Culinaris*)



As featured in the [Lentil Underground](#), these lentils helped to put Timeless Foods on the map. When cooked, they hold their color and their shape extremely well, glistening like caviar. They're good in any context that lentils are at home, but they hold their shape better than brown, puy, and red lentils, so you might as well save them for recipes where you can show them off, even if just lightly salted and served over rice.

Speaking of lentils and rice, 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.

The video linked to above is worth a watch. And these two recipes linked below are really worth trying out in turn: Dawn Perry's [Spiced Black Lentils with Yogurt and Mint](#) and Mark Bittman's [Coconut Lentil Soup with Vegetables](#)

-Sugar Kelp-

I love seaweed but I know everyone may not. I put at least a teaspoon in *every* single pot of beans I cook at home for both the umami effect and the trace minerals.

I am confident if people read the [Seaweed Chronicles](#) they will become inspired and excited by not just the culinary implications of seaweed, but by the inspiring work being done by seaweed farmers and foragers along the North Atlantic coast, and the economic and ecological revitalizations that work is bringing about.

Sarah Redmond features prominently in this book, and she is the owner of Spring Tide Seaweed whom we sourced this Sugar Kelp from. Worth noting, Sarah has pioneered some of the fundamental methods and tools being used in kelp farming. Here is a [short video introduction](#) to her and her work.

Rojo Chiquito (*P. Vulgaris*)



Rojo Chiquito is a recent addition to the class of beans simply known as 'small red beans'. 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.

I offered one chili recipe earlier in the King of the Early section, but here is one more chili recipe that calls these beans out by name: an Instant Pot-centered [Barbacoa and Rojo Chiquito Bean recipe](#) shared by India Tree.

If you would like another idea beyond putting these in a chili, this [Red Beans and Rice](#) by Adam Ragusea.

Mayacoba Beans (*P. Vulgaris*)



Here is yet one more beautiful and delicious bean with roots in Peru. These beans (like seemingly every other bean) go by many names. Whatever you call them Mayacoba or Mayocoba, Peruano or Canario, or even Sulfur Bean, they're beautiful and delicious.

This particular batch of beans was grown near where my mom's family hails from in Central Michigan by [Carlson-Arbogast Farm](#). This family farm has been growing beans for more than 140 years. These beans are a comparatively thinner-skinned bean with a soft body that makes them very much at home in any recipe calling for a creamy bean.

Marco Toledo makes some entertaining cooking videos, and his [Peruvian Style beans](#) are the perfect home for this bag of beans.

You can try whipping up his [cebolla criolla recipe](#) to accompany them too.

Yellow Peas (*Pisum Sativum*)



Aroostook County in Maine is way up there. It's northern border is Canada, and it gets its name from the Mi'kmaq word meaning 'beautiful water'. It's a special place and [Aurora Mills and Farm](#) is a special place amidst that special place. Now in its second generation, they are [playing a role in the revitalization of Maine's grain economy](#). Rotating peas through their fields after wheat crops helps to replenish their soils while breaking up any disease, fungal, or pest pressures too. So these peas play multiple roles on their farm: a cover crop of sorts, and a product.

If you crack these peas you will see a more yellow seed under the paler seed coat. You would essentially be looking at a dal, one of the staples of Indian cooking.

So why not try these out in this [Dal Tadka recipe](#) in place of the mung bean dal they are using.

For a different flavor palette entirely, here is a [leveled up split pea soup from Carla](#).

Here's a quite different take on [split pea soup with spring greens](#) from Larch Hanson and Nina Crocker of Maine Seaweed, seaweed foragers up in Maine. You can use 1 tablespoon of the Sugar Kelp in your Bean where it calls for 1 T of "seaweed soup mix".