

# BEANPOLES AND PEASTICKS

There is no better indicator of how remote we have become from our environment than the import of twigs, in the form of bamboo from China, to support runner beans. This leaflet describes how to buy and use locally grown beanpoles and peasticks in the garden so that at the very least we can leave the bamboo in China for the Pandas!

## **RUNNER BEAN SUPPORTS**

Runner bean supports should be erected prior to sowing or planting, if it is done when the beans are already growing the roots may be damaged. The minimum recommended size for the poles is 7' x 1 1/2" diameter and if looked after properly they will give five or more years use. Above 2" diameter poles get difficult to push into the ground. Plant or sow the beans on the outside of poles. The supports will be hidden by the mature beans. There are 3 grades - Light, Standard and Heavy Duty.

## **Wigwams**

Four poles, in a square, or six poles, in a circle, set 18"-24" apart. Garden twine or wire is used to tie the poles together near the top (as shown above).

## **Crossed Poles**

Five pairs of crossed poles with one horizontal support will cover a 6' run. The space between the rows of poles should be 24" with 18" between each crossed pair. Erect the two outside pairs first and then attach the horizontal support, fix it with garden twine or wire. The remaining pairs of poles are then erected.

## **Looking after your beanpoles**

As it ages hazel becomes very brittle and thin poles are liable to snap. All beanpoles are susceptible to decay. If you wish you can soak the pointed ends in plant friendly preservative. Make sure they are dry before pushing them into the ground. Once you have finished with the beanpole for the season store it off damp ground, under cover and in a dry atmosphere to prevent them from rotting. Stout beanpoles will last 5 or more years if stored properly. Broken ones can be used as plant stakes and eventually warm the gardeners toes as kindling and firewood, nothing needs to be wasted!