



## Prince Edward County Master Gardeners

### Gardening with Children: Building a Bean Pole Teepee

This is a fun project the children can help with and enjoy throughout the season. They can help plant the seeds (which are large enough even for small hands) and watch their teepee grow.

Once the bean plants are up they will have their own secret hiding place in the garden. Then, they can help harvest the beans!



#### Materials

- 6-8 long bamboo sticks 6-10 feet long
- string or twine
- soil amendments (if necessary)
- pole bean seeds such as Scarlet Runners
- annual climbing flower seeds such as Morning Glory
- a few marigolds, if you want to plant them around the outside

#### Method:

Determine the size of the teepee you want based on the age, size and number of children. Choose a sunny location in the garden and mark out a horseshoe shape using either a garden hose, flour or string.

Dig a trench along the horseshoe and amend the soil with compost if necessary.

Assemble your bamboo poles around the horseshoe, plant them firmly in the soil and tie them together at the top to form a teepee. If you don't have bamboo poles, use long, straight branches.



Add the twine to your teepee, starting at the top of one of the poles, working your way down and around the poles to create a trellis. Make sure the final loop of the twine is close enough to the ground that the small bean and morning glory seedlings will be able to reach their climbing support easily.

Finally, plant your seeds! By involving the children with the seed planting, they will have a sense of achievement when the beans begin to sprout. Following the directions on the seed packets, after all danger of frost has past, plant the seeds 1" deep and about 3-4' apart. Intersperse the morning glory

seeds, spacing accordingly. Cover with soil, pat down and water thoroughly.

The beans should sprout after about a week.

Keep the bean seedlings watered and help guide them to the base of the teepee trellis if they need it. It may seem slow at first but once all the seeds have sprouted, the teepee will really begin to take shape. You can also plant marigolds around the outside base of the teepee.

The bean pole teepee can become a play area, a fort or even a reading area for the children. They can place a light blanket on the ground inside their teepee.

Later on in the season when the beans begin to ripen, the children can help to harvest them for their supper. If you keep the beans picked, they will continue to produce.

In the fall when the plants begin to turn brown, remove the poles and cut away the twine and store the poles for next year. Toss all the bean plants and morning glory plants into the compost bin.



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*Adapted from The Artful Parent <https://artfulparent.com/>*

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