

# Build a better veg planner 2026

## Background

Most veg growing calendars for the UK are quite generic and give little indication as to location. This can be quite confusing for new gardeners, as the time to plant out a tender crop will be quite different in London compared to an exposed site in Northumberland. We would like to collect data from gardeners around the UK, using the climbing French Bean as a model crop, so that we can get a better idea of what works in each region. Many people may be recording this information anyway, but it would be useful to have it all gathered in the same way in one place.

The last few years have also seen departures from the weather we are accustomed to. Not only has there been a trend for milder wetter winters, but there has been considerable variability with an increased occurrence of 'extreme' events. We would like to collect repeated records over time so that we can observe any longitudinal trends and how they affect our growing season.



## Fryd Lab

We are now in partnering with the Fryd Garden Planning App to make it easier to keep a record of your data as you go along. Fryd is a garden planning app and a space to share gardening tips. They have also teamed up with a number of organisations around Europe to set up a citizen science space where people can run simple micro experiments and log simple observations. You can find out more here.

<https://fryd.app/en/lab>

## Aims of this experiment

- ✓ Collect a standardised UK regional dataset to provide a better indication of regional variability for key dates in the growing calendar
- ✓ Provide longitudinal records to observe long term trends or changes in the gardening calendar

## What we need from you:

- A growing space of at least 1.2m x 1.2 m plot where you grow your climbing French Beans
- Climbing French bean seeds we suggest Cobra as a standard variety, but others will work
- Growing care: sowing, planting out and watering the plots
- Recording online of key dates during the growing season

## Instructions

If you are taking part in this experiment, we assume that you have probably grown French Beans before, so please stick to the method that you normally use.

Our method of growing French beans is:

### Sowing

- Sow each bean 2 cm deep into 8cm (3 in) pots of peat free compost and keep in a warm place until they germinate

### Plant care

- Keep the plants in a warm light place to allow them to develop
- Once they have developed a couple of true leaves (the leaves after the first couple of seed leaves), put the pots outside during the day to allow the plants to harden off

### Bed preparation

- Weed the bed and add compost so that it has moderate levels of fertility
- Construct a wigwam of canes or sticks, around 2 m high, to allow the plants to climb

### Planting out

- After the danger of last frost has passed, plant out your plants around your wigwam and water them in well
- Water as necessary and look for slugs at night. Replace any plants that get badly damaged
- Encourage them to climb up the wigwam
- Weed the plots as needed

Alternatively, you may sow the beans seeds directly into the plot, once the soil has warmed up.

### Records

- Variety grown
- Date of sowing
- Date of planting out
- Date of first flowering
- Date of first pod set
- Date of first harvest
- Date of last harvest

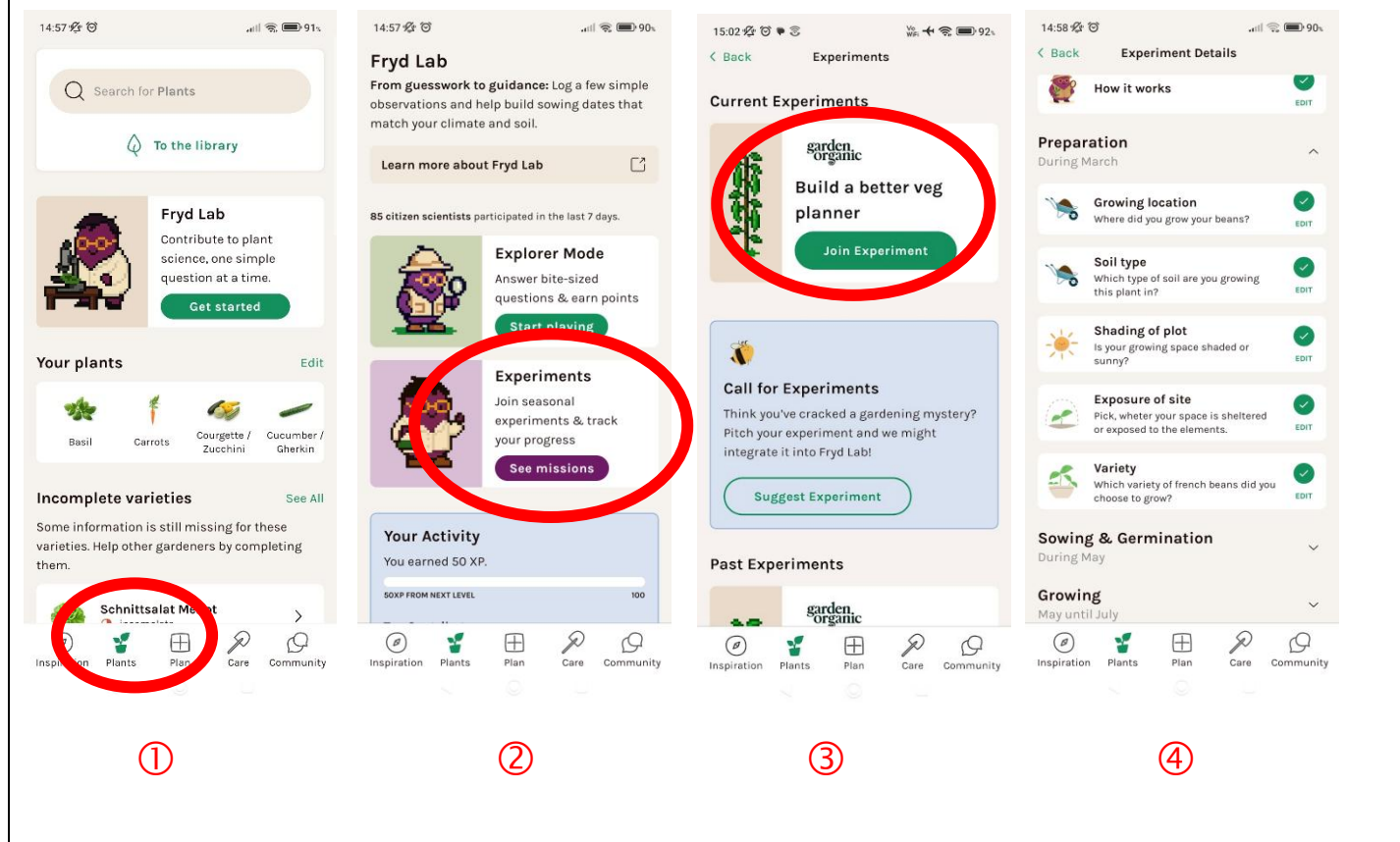
## Recording data

### Using the Fryd garden planning and citizen science app

The easiest way is to use the Fryd App. Search for Fryd on the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store and install it on your phone and sign up for the app (there is no cost).

This will make it much easier to keep track of the experiment, and you can also try out the garden planner.

Follow the simple instructions for joining the experiment:



If you don't want to sign up to the app, you can still use the old forms.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/what-we-do/citizen-science-and-research/members-experiments/build-a-better-veg-planner-2>

**You can now store results on the form as you go** – press 'Save' and it will email you a link, which you can then use to resume entering results. Please keep this email in a safe place so that you can retrieve the results. If you do lose it, then you will need to email us ([experiments@gardenorganic.org.uk](mailto:experiments@gardenorganic.org.uk)) and ask me for a new link. Alternatively you can save the link as a bookmark in your browser so that you can readily access it.

We welcome good quality photos. The best ones may be published in our magazine and on social media. Please send photos to [experiments@gardenorganic.org.uk](mailto:experiments@gardenorganic.org.uk). Unfortunately, we are unable to use hard copy prints.

## Recording sheet

### Your site

**What is the first half of your postcode?**

#### Soil type

- Very sandy     
  Quite sandy     
  Silty     
  Mix of sand, silt and clay (loam)
- Some clay     
  Heavy clay     
  Peaty     
  Chalky

#### Shading of plot

- Shaded     
  Semi shaded     
  Sunny

#### Exposure of site

- Sheltered     
  Semi sheltered     
  Exposed

### Your plants

**Which variety of French bean did you choose to grow?**

**What date did you sow the French beans?**

**Did you sow them directly or in pots?**

- Directly     
  In pots

**Where did you sow them?**

- Outside, no protection     
  Outside with protection     
  In the house / windowsill

**What date did they first emerge?**

**What date did you plant them out?**

**Where did you grow them?**

- Outside     
  Glasshouse     
  Polytunnel

### Flowering

Please estimate the date when the plants started flowering

### Pod set

Please estimate the date when the plants started setting pods

### Harvesting

Please record the date of your first harvest

Please record the date of your last harvest

How would you describe the yield of your beans this year?

Disaster, very little or almost no crop

Poor crop, less than usual

Average crop, similar to usual

Good crop, better than usual

Excellent crop, much better than usual

Did you experience any pests or diseases on your French beans?

Any other comments?

**Please answer the following questions about this experiment**

Please tick which of the boxes you think applied to your experience of taking part in the members' experiments this year.					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I enjoyed taking part in this experiment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt I learnt something new	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt I was contributing to something useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am likely to take part again	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other comments					
Any suggestions for future Members experiments					