

Phaseolus coccineus

[Synonyms : *Phaseolus coccineus* var. *coccineus*, *Phaseolus coccineus* subsp. *obvallatus*, *Phaseolus coccineus* subsp. *polyanthus*, *Phaseolus formosus*, *Phaseolus multiflorus*, *Phaseolus multiflorus* var. *coccineus*, *Phaseolus obvallatus*, *Phaseolus polyanthus*]

RUNNER BEAN is a perennial (cultivated as an annual) climbing vine. Native to Middle America it has pea-like scarlet flowers.

It is also known as Aztec bean, *Beni bana ingen* (Japanese), *Bohne* (German), Butterfly runner, Dutch cane, Dutch case-knife bean, *Fazol šarlatový* (Czech), *Fazuľa* (Slovak), *Feuerbohne* (German), Fire bean, *Haricot d'Espagne* (French), *Hong hua cai dou* (Chinese), *Hühng fà chòi dáu* (Chinese-Cantonese), *Kapuzinerbohne* (German), Knife bean, Multiflora bean, *Prunkbohnen* (German), Red flowered runner bean, Red flowered vegetable bean, *Rosenböna* (Swedish), *Ruusupapu* (Finnish), Scarlet bean, Scarlet runner, Scarlet runner bean, and String bean.

Some varieties can have white, or red and white flowers, and plain coloured, spotted or blotched, pink or black pods as well as the long flattened, green pods familiar to many in Europe.

Coccineus means 'scarlet'.

In North America the seeds had a significant role in Iroquois Indian ritual for planting and harvesting crops.

Runner bean was also an important source of food for the North American Iroquois tribe The seeds were cooked and added to corn paste (*Zea*) for making bread – and the seed pods (apart from being boiled and dried for future use) were also made into soups, added to stews and cooked as a vegetable.

The young green pods containing unripe beans (and the dried ripe beans) are cooked as a vegetable. When the runner bean first arrived in Europe the unripe beans were believed to be inedible and they only began to be eaten from the 18th Century. Today they are particularly enjoyed as a vegetable in certain parts of Europe, particularly Britain.

In the United States runner bean is still said to be valued far more for its ornamental qualities.