FORAGE & GRAIN CROPS

Faba Beans

Winter pulse that lifts nitrogen for the next crop

Vicia faba

Faba bean is a winter growing pulse, or food legume crop. It is a cool season crop in Australia, planted in mid to late autumn and harvested in late spring to early summer. Faba beans may be grown where rainfall is higher than normal and spring temperatures are milder, and they respond well to irrigation on heavy clay soils.



QUICK FACTS

TYPE & PERSISTENCY
Annual

MIN RAINFALL
400 mm+

TOLERANCES
Mild Frost

END USE
Green manure, Grain, Break crop

ABOUT THIS VARIETY

Faba beans can be grown as a component of a rotation based on winter or summer cereals or cotton, or as part of a green manure where soils have been degraded in organic and physical fertility. Crop rotations which include faba bean in sequence with winter cereals and summer cereals, or cotton, are more productive and profitable than those in which legume phases are excluded, because yields and quality of cereal grain and cotton fibre are usually higher after faba bean.

Nitrogen fixation in the root system of the faba bean makes more soil N available to the next crop, reducing the need for fertiliser N, and in some cases adding to soil organic N. Up to 40% of the N in a faba bean crop is underground. Levels of soil-borne diseases (like crown rot) and pests (like root lesion nematode) of wheat are reduced by growing faba bean as a break crop.

Faba bean plants in Australia grow to a height of 1.5 m at maturity. The plant is erect, and produces stems from its base, and the taproot bears a profusion of fibrous roots in the top 30 cm of soil. Seeds vary in size depending on variety, from large flattened beans (also known as broad beans) through medium sizes to smaller, rounded seeds like field peas; varieties with medium sized seed are the main types grown in Australia.

KEY ATTRIBUTES

- ✓ Winter growing pulse and food legume
- ✓ Nitrogen fixation makes more soil N available to the next crop
- ✓ Responds well to irrigation on heavy clay soils
- ✓ Rotation crop with winter or summer cereals or cotton
- ✓ Break crop that reduces crown rot and root lesion nematode
- ✓ Green manure option where soils are degraded

PLANTING & GRAZING NOTES

Faba beans are planted in mid to late autumn and harvested in late spring to early summer. The crop develops rapidly from July to September during flowering and podding, when daytime temperatures are 15–25˚C; flowering stops as temperatures approach 30˚C. Ensure faba bean is sown within the recommended window: early sowing within the window is important in the medium and low rainfall zones, but responses are inconsistent in the high rainfall zone. Sowing rate should be based on target plant density and will vary with seed size. Faba bean seed should be inoculated with Group F inoculant. Sowing equipment may need to be modified to accommodate the large seed; sow 5-8 cm deep, and dry sowing is an option. Paddocks may require rolling to make harvest manageable. Plants can tolerate mild frost during vegetative stages, but severe frosts can deform and lodge stems and can cause death of flowers and immature pods after flowering.

DISEASE & PEST RESISTANCE

A good overall level of disease resistance, including being less susceptible to chocolate spot and rust, and resistant to Ascochyta blight.

HOW IT'S SOLD

FORM	PACK
Bare	25 kg