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Pole bean need to be staked. We're growing two varieties this year, Kentucky Wonder and the Purple Variety that Ed and Margaret gave us many years ago. I like picking pole beans because I don't like the bending over that bush beans require.

Along the garden's deer fence is a good place to grow them. We lean sticks up against the fence and the plants quickly send up their runners. It amazes me how a climbing plant sends out tendrils and knows where to go, and how quickly they find the poles. By the time we finish staking the row, the first plants are already wrapping around the stakes.

We use two kinds of stakes. Eight foot long poles that are an inch by an inch are all the beans need to grow on. A local sawmill cut them for us, out of ash lumber. Poplar or soft maple won't last as long as ash or oak.

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The Chinese bamboo at the end of the driveway also supplies bean poles. The older canes last better than the new ones. A bamboo patch grows bigger canes each year, so the smaller ones with the more developed branches are the older, more mature canes. They are harder and don't bend as easy as the new, taller shoots.

Leppers or small saw cut them down, and we wiggle them out of the patch. A machete, swung the opposite way it grew, clips off the branches. They are cut into eight foot lengths and some some of the straighter ones are left long.

These long ones are laid out between two rows of beans, overlapping a foot or two. Metal fence posts are driven in at the overlaps, and a cane or stake is tied to it at an angle. They are also tied where they cross, and the long poles are placed on top of the X.

Two more stakes go underneath the lateral pole at the halfway pint to hold it up and keep it from swagging. Then the other poles are leaned against it and pushed into the ground on either side,

right next to the beans. They'll climb all the way to the top and make a tunnel of easy to pick beans.

Sometimes beans are grown in a circle with a six or eight foot diameter. Poles are set around them and tied at the tops to make a Teepee.

When mature, these beans completely cover the trellis and are a beautiful sight in the garden. Even at the end of an eight foot pole they are sending out tendrils which wave in the air, looking to continue their ascent.

One time I traded a cow for some beans. They really grew tall. They kept on growing taller and taller. So I climbed up the bean stalk. But that's just one more tall tale.