

Azuki Bean

Vigna angularis (Fabaceae)

Fast Facts:

Acres in Washington: less than 20 acres Number of Growers in Washington: 10
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Description of crop:

Azuki beans are a dry bean grown primarily for export to Japan. Production practices are similar to conventional dry bean production practices; however azuki beans have a longer (120 day) growing season. Yields typically are lower than for other dry beans by about 1200 to 1300 pounds per acre and azukis are more sensitive to climatic conditions and soil salinity. Planting occurs in mid-May and harvest is in mid-September. Beans are harvested when 75 percent to 80 percent of the beans are mature. They are windrowed or direct combined. Azukis are also prone to shattering, so care must be taken during harvest. As with all dry beans, harvest is a delicate process if nightshade plants are growing in the field. Mechanical harvesters indiscriminately collect both the nightshade berry and azuki bean and if the harvester is not gentle, the nightshade berries can get crushed. The crushed berries are very sticky and stain the beans. Severely stained beans are unusable for human consumption. Most azuki acreage in Washington is grown under contract. In 2006, azuki bean production in Washington was down since the cost to raise them is not being offset by their current price.

Key pests:

Insect pests include lygus bugs and the two-spotted spider mite. Nightshades, lambsquarter, pigweeds, kochia and grasses are the primary weed pests. Sclerotinia can be an occasional problem, but azukis are more resistant to the disease than are other dry beans. Azuki beans may also be susceptible to viruses.

Key pesticides:

Treflan and Sonalan effectively control nightshade and most problematic weeds. Since the crop is sensitive to many herbicides, hoeing can be a means of control. Aldicarb is occasionally applied before planting to control two-spotted spider mite. Lygus bugs can be controlled with dimethoate. Comite and sulfur are also used for mite control, but are only effective on average mite populations. A combination of seeds treated with Lorsban and Platinum are used at planting to control average infestations of seed corn maggot and wireworms. Thimet can also be used.

Critical pest control issues:

Azuki beans currently are classified as a dry bean. However, they are in the *Vigna* genus unlike common dry beans. In the future, a separate classification for *Vigna* beans (e.g. mung beans, black-eyed peas) may be necessary. For example, azuki beans are more sensitive to herbicides than are common beans. This herbicide sensitivity is a critical issue among growers who often rely on hoeing rather than herbicides. Two-spotted spider mite is a critical pest control issue for growers due to restrictions (length of preharvest interval) surrounding aldicarb application. Nightshade control is also an issue because of economic losses brought on by contaminated beans. Viral diseases can pose a threat to production, but genetic breeding is underway to produce resistant varieties.

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**Location
of production:** Grant and Adams counties.



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Azuki Bean Production in Washington State



Area of Azuki Bean Production