

Rejuvenating Okra: Producing Two Crops from One Planting

► One planting of okra can produce both a spring crop and an even bigger fall crop if you follow a few simple guidelines.

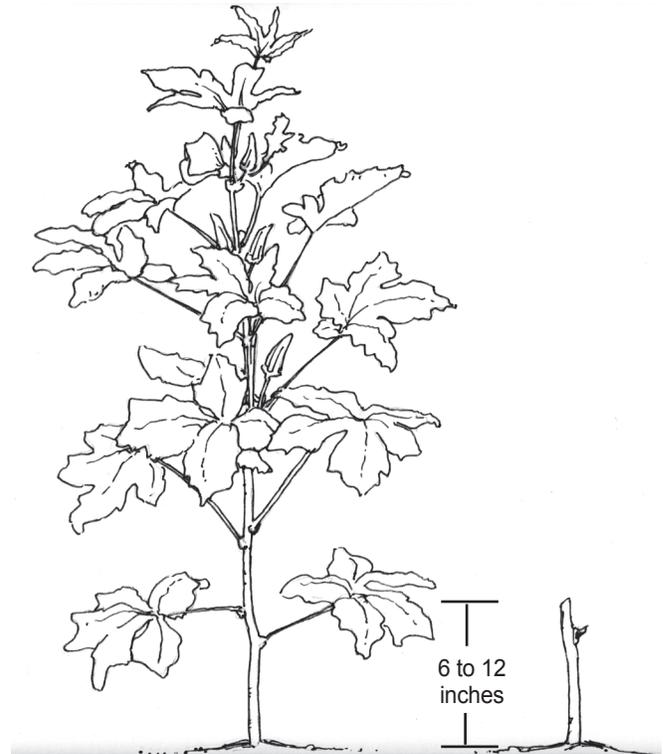
Most okra cultivars are ready to pick 55 to 60 days after planting, or about 4 to 6 days after flowering. Pods should be harvested when they are 2½ to 3½ inches long. They can be snapped off or cut off. Cutting takes longer but produces a cleaner, nicer product.

On average, an acre of okra should produce 200 to 250 30-pound bushels on bare ground when irrigated. Yields are considerably greater when okra is grown on polyethylene mulch or mulched with compost or other organic materials.

As okra plants age through the summer, they tend to top out and produce a declining number of pods. Market price for okra typically declines sharply as well. At this point in production, cutting back or topping your okra will allow plantings to reestablish themselves.

Cutting back okra allows the plants to rejuvenate to produce a late summer/fall crop. Cut back plants using a mower or pruning shears, leaving 6 to 12 inches of each plant above the ground. Refertilize with 15-0-14, 8-0-24, or 13-0-44 to encourage regrowth and development of side branches.

By following these guidelines, your fall yield of okra often will exceed that of your spring crops.



Cut back okra so the plant can reestablish itself.