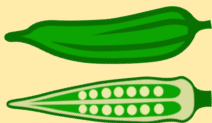


# Okra



**Sun:** Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space 9 to 12 inches apart within rows or 1 plant per 5- to 7-gallon container. Plant April through July after any danger of frost has passed.

**Soil:** Amend with organic matter to create well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If a soil test shows that the pH level is below 6.2, apply lime in early spring and as recommended.

For proper drainage in a container garden, use potting mix and ensure that containers have drainage holes. You could also use self-watering containers.

**Water:** Keep soil consistently moist, but not saturated. Apply roughly 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Avoid wetting leaves to prevent fungal diseases. Mulch helps retain moisture.

**Plant:** Direct sow seeds 1 inch deep and 12 inches apart. Indoors, start seedlings 6 to 8 weeks before planting time, and slowly harden off one week before planting in the garden. Transplant when 3 or 4 leaves appear. If buying transplants, choose those with healthy color and stocky appearance. Avoid those with flowers or fruit. Dig the planting hole as deep as the root ball. Firmly pat down the soil and water deeply.

**Fertilize:** If you don't have a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting and according to label directions. Reapply beside plants, 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress) after the first pods are harvested.

**Insects/Diseases/Weeds:** Scout plants frequently for insect and disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, also known as “worms”). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

**Harvest:** Harvest at 45 to 55 days. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

**Other:** Dwarf varieties, often spineless, use less garden space. Dwarf varieties are less likely to fall over when growing in containers. For better germination, soak seeds 6 hours before planting. Harvest pods when 2 to 4 inches long and then continually every 2 or 3 days. Visit [www.aces.edu/go/growmore](http://www.aces.edu/go/growmore) for more information.

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