



Okra

About Okra

Okra is a warm season vegetable that can be grown for fresh table use or for processing (e.g. dried). Pepper can be direct seeded but is usually grown from transplants. Varieties vary widely in size, shape, color and flavor. They may be classified as sweet, hot, chili, long, or others.



Climate and Soil

Temperature	Frost tolerance	Water needs	Tolerance to waterlogging	Drought tolerance
Optimum 30-35°C, minimum 15°C, maximum 42°C. Chilling injury below 10°C.	Sensitive to frost at any growth stage.	Deep rooted, moderate total needs but regular watering needed.	Low at any time. Root fungal diseases increase at high soil water.	Fair to good. Stress can result in low yields.
Humidity tolerance	Wind tolerance	Soil needs	Nutrient requirements	
Low – Leaf foliar diseases in wet environments.	Fair to poor.	Sandy – earlier planting; Medium– highest yields; Heavy – risk of poor drainage	Mod-high N, mod P, low-mod K	

Production, Harvest and Postharvest Practices

Planting Material	Direct seed in warm soil, >15°C, 2-3 cm deep. Seed is hard; recommend soaking or scarifying. May be transplanted also with plants at 3-4 leaf stage
Varieties	Open-pollinated and hybrid varieties.
Spacing	Direct seeded on single or double row 65-100 cm beds at rates up to 10kg/ha or 1 cm in-row spacing, thinned to with 15-20cm. Transplants at 20cm to give 50,000-150,000 plants/ha
Site selection and Field Preparation	Level soil to permit irrigation. Till in fall for early spring planting. Raised beds to increase soil surface area, aeration, drainage. Fine seed bed.
Time to harvest	50-60 days after planting, 4-7 days after anthesis.
Length of harvest	2-3 day intervals for 50-55 days.
Expected yields	10-20 t/ha
Harvest	Hand harvest pods 5-10 cm long. Very susceptible to bruising and/or bleaching.
Storage	Very short shelf or storage life, 7-10 days at 10-15°C. Susceptible to chilling injury at 7°C. Do not store with ethylene producing fruit
Pests and diseases	Weeds, insects, nematode, fungal diseases

Prepared by Ron Voss and Mark Bell 2007

Primary references: Jose Aguiar. 1996. Okra Production in California. UC Vegetable Research and Information Center. www.vric.ucdavis.edu.
V. Rubatzky and M. Yamaguchi. 1999. World Vegetables, 2nd ed. Aspen Publications. 843 pp.

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