

family  
**Vegetable  
Garden**  
series

EXTENSION BULLETIN E-824 (22)

# Lima Beans and Okra

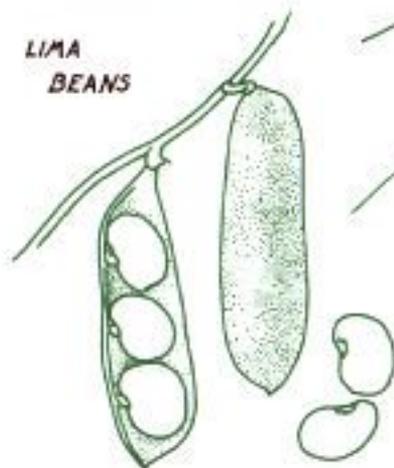
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## LONG, HOT SUMMER

Lima beans and okra are warm season vegetables that grow best in hot weather and enjoy full sun. Lima beans need a very long growing season. However by choosing the proper variety, you should be able to harvest them before the first frost in southern lower Michigan.



LIMA  
BEANS



OKRA



## PLANTING DATES

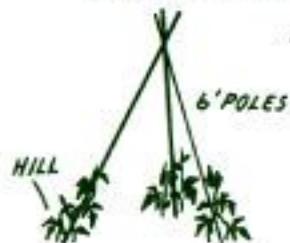
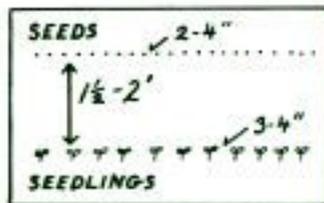
Plant lima beans and okra May 20 to June 1, after all danger of frost is past. Make sure the ground has warmed up before planting. If planted later, they probably won't have time to mature. They are commonly not transplanted.

## LIMA BEANS

Lima beans, known as "butter beans" in the South, have similar requirements to snap beans, but are more sensitive to cold soils and have a longer growing season (about 4 months).

### PLANTING

- Sow seeds 2 to 4 inches apart and 1 to 2 inches deep. Leave  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 feet between rows. Thin seedlings to 3 or 4 inches apart.



- Pole varieties may be planted in rows like bush varieties, or in "hills" (groups of seeds, not mounds). Plant 6 seeds in each hill and thin to 2 or 3 plants. Pole varieties should be supported (see No. 6 in this series: Garden Beans).



5-6'

### THE BASICS

soil: A sandy soil is best, but any well-drained soil will do. If you have a lot of clay, add organic matter such as leaves, grass clippings, well-rotted manure, etc.

fertilizer: Before planting, work in 2 pounds (4 cups) of 5-20-20 fertilizer per 100 square feet of soil.

If leaves are light green, apply a high nitrogen fertilizer before blossoms appear. Sprinkle it 4 inches from plants and work into soil.

weeds: Cultivate lightly or use a mulch. Black plastic will keep the soil warm and moist.

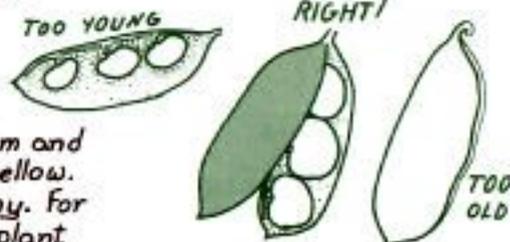
water: Water during dry spells.

### HARVEST AND USES

- Pick when seeds in pod feel firm and plump, but before pods turn yellow. Overmature beans are starchy. For dry beans, let them dry on plant.

• Store lima beans in the refrigerator for immediate use. Freeze or can them for later use.

• Lima beans are great cooked by themselves or added to mixed vegetables or stews.

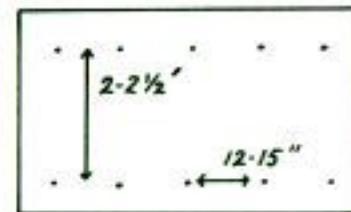


## OKRA

Okra, also called "gumbo" in the South, is an easy vegetable to grow.

### PLANTING

Plant seeds  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch deep. Thin seedlings to 12 to 15 inches apart. Leave 2 to 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet between rows.



### THE BASICS

soil: Plant in a well-drained soil.

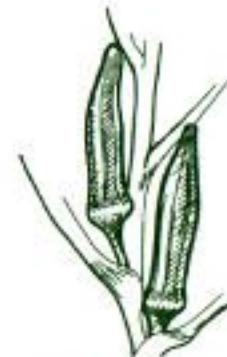
fertilizer: Before planting, mix in 2 pounds (4 cups) of 5-20-20 fertilizer per 100 square feet of soil. Apply a high nitrogen fertilizer when pods first begin to form. Sprinkle 4 inches from plants and work into the soil.

weeds: Cultivate lightly or use a mulch. Black plastic will keep the soil warm and moist.

water: Water during dry spells.

### HARVEST AND USES

- Harvest okra when pods are young, soon after petals fall. If you wait too long, pods become tough and stringy. Pick pods often so plants produce more.



- Add okra to stews or mixed vegetables or dip in batter and fry.

• To store okra, freeze or can pods whole or sliced. They may be dried, too (see No. 11 in this series: Drying and Storing Vegetables).



## RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

Days from planting to harvest in ( )  
(Lima beans usually take most  
of the summer to mature.)

### LIMA BEANS

Large Seeded, Bush  
Fordhook 242 (75)  
(heat resistant)

Large Seeded, Pole  
King of the Garden (88)

Small Seeded, Bush  
Henderson Bush (65)  
\*Thaxter (74)

\*resistant to downy mildew  
disease.

- Small-seeded lima beans mature sooner than large-seeded ones.
- Bush varieties need no support and mature faster, but pole varieties produce more beans.

### OKRA

Dwarf Green Long Pod (53)  
Emerald (56)  
Clemson Spineless (58)

## INSECTS AND DISEASE

If insects or disease become a problem,  
see Extension Bulletin E-760 (b) or your  
County Extension Agent.



KEYS

TO

SUCCESS

• Plant after all danger of frost.

• Don't plant lima beans later than June 1.

• Harvest when still tender.

Other bulletins in this series provide additional information on vegetable gardening.

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