

HOW TO GROW OCHRO

Ochro is easily grown throughout the year. Two of these plants will supply enough fruits (pods) for the home. Ochro contains Vitamins A and C, calcium, carbohydrates, protein, fibre and iron.

Ochro grows best in fertile, well drained soil with a pH of 6.0 to 6.5.



Fig.1 - Ochro Plant with Fruits

SPACING

Ochroes may be interplanted with vegetables or ornamentals in the home garden. However when planting several ochro plants in the same area, use the recommended spacing for the variety being planted. Plant Local variety 90cm (36ins) apart within rows and 120cm (48 ins) apart between rows. Plant Imported variety (short) 60cm (24 ins) apart within rows and 90 cm (36 ins) between rows.

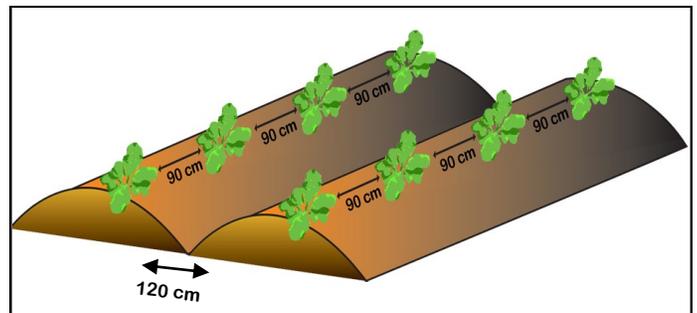


Fig.2 – Spacing In Ochroes

PLANTING

Mix one handful of well rotted manure with the soil in each planting hole.

Sow 2-3 seeds in each planting hole (according to the spacing used). Place seeds 2.5 cm (1 in) deep.

Water daily in the absence of rain and ensure that excess water drains off the planting area.

Three weeks after sowing, leave one strong plant in each hole and continue watering daily.

AVAILABLE VARIETY



Fig. 3 Clemson Spineless

FERTILIZING

Two weeks after germination, apply 5g (1 tsp) of a complete fertilizer high in phosphorus such as 12:24:12, to encourage root growth. Be sure to place this fertilizer at least 5 cm (2 in) away from the plant.

Thereafter, continue fertilizing every 10-14 days with a granular (NPK) fertilizer high in potassium such as 12:12:17:2, using 5 g (1 tsp) per plant. This can be continued for the duration of the plant's life.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Use a clean, dry knife to cut off the dry and yellowing plant parts. This will encourage new plant growth and more fruit formation.

Leave a few ochroes to dry on the plant. Collect their seeds for the next planting.

PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

Pests and Diseases left unchecked can hinder a plant's ability to produce food for us. These problems can be managed, using good cultural practices such as the use of resistant varieties, biological agents and chemicals. A combination of these methods is best and is known as Integrated Pest Management.

Ochro is a favourite of the Hibiscus Mealybug (see factsheet titled "Integrated Pest Management for Home Gardens" and factsheets of the "Hibiscus Mealybug Series").

Other major pests of ochroes are whiteflies aphids and mites.

Use appropriate insecticides, and miticides to help control the above pests.

Ochro plants are susceptible to diseases such as stem end rot and powdery mildew. Care should be taken to water the soil area and not the plants. Appropriate fungicides can be used effectively. Also ensure good drainage to reduce fungal problems.

Always alternate pesticides and follow label instructions closely.

HARVESTING

Ochroes (Local variety) will be ready to be harvested in about 60 days after planting or 4-7 days after flowering. Imported varieties can be harvested in 42-45 days after planting.

Use a sharp, clean knife to harvest the pods, leaving approximately 2.5 cm (1in) of the stem intact.

Sample one or two to determine if they snap easily at the tips. This will indicate that the majority of ochroes are ready for harvesting.

Harvest ochroes every other day and store in a cool place.

Harvest/remove pods on time to encourage proper flowering and good yields. It is important to harvest the ochro when the pods are young as they become tough, woody, and inedible if left on the plant too long.

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