Today on Gardening in a Minute: okra.

Okra is a signature Southern vegetable that is often used as a thickener in soups or gumbos, or sometimes just served up fried.

Okra is a warm-season crop that should be planted in a sunny location with fertile, well-drained soil.

You can start harvesting about 60 days after planting, once pods reach about two to three inches in length. It’s a good idea to harvest early and often, since pods will be too tough to eat if they get too old.

When harvesting, wear gloves to protect yourself from the plant’s prickly hairs and use shears to cut through its fibrous stems.

Okra has become increasingly valued as an edible ornamental. It produces beautiful, hibiscus-like flowers, and varieties like ‘Alabama Red’ and ‘Burgundy’ also offer bold, red foliage.

For more information about okra and many other gardening topics, contact your county Extension office or visit Gardening in a Minute dot com.

Gardening in a Minute is a production of the University of Florida’s Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology, IFAS Extension, and WUFT-FM.