Recognize the problem
Flea beetles are known to feed more on okra leaves and fruits which can result in significant yield losses, especially if the critical stage (early vegetative stage) is attacked. The adults are tiny shiny insects that feed on foliage, creating many tiny rounded holes especially on seedlings. The grubs feed on roots and may survive beneath the soil surface or amongst plant debris around the base of the plant.

Background
The use of locally available inert materials such as ash from wood or rice husk can offer effective control of the okra beetle in the field. The ash acts as an abrasive for the outer layer of the beetle which causes loss of body water and eventually death of the beetle. The insects are irritated by the high levels of silicon and the needle-like particles in the rice husk ash. The okra leaves become unsuitable for the beetles to feed, move and multiply on. Ash from wood fires contains calcium, potash and several microelements which may also improve the health of the plant and okra can do well under slightly alkaline conditions created by the ash.

Management
• Make or collect ash from wood or rice husk
• Sieve ash using a fine wire mesh to obtain a powder
• Sprinkle the powder uniformly and moderately on both the lower and upper surfaces of the okra leaves
• Make sure you spread the ash moderately in order not to block the leaf surfaces which would affect the plants’ food making
• Apply wood or rice husk at a rate of 10g per plant stand 21 days after planting
• The application of ash should be done biweekly until 14 days to harvesting
• Where the application of ash is disturbed by rains, repeat it in 3 days’ time for effective control
• Follow other recommended agronomic practices such as use of certified disease free seeds, correct spacing and fertilizer rates.
• Re-entry period to the field should be 12-24 hours

Scientific name(s) > *Podagrica* spp.