

STRAWBERRIES

ATTENTION!

Avoid planting strawberries in soils where previous crops have included strawberries, brambles, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants or peppers. These crops may harbor soil pathogens, which will affect the health and performance of your new plants.

AT-A-GLANCE

pH:

6.5 - 6.8

Spacing:

12"-18" in the row

3'-4' between rows



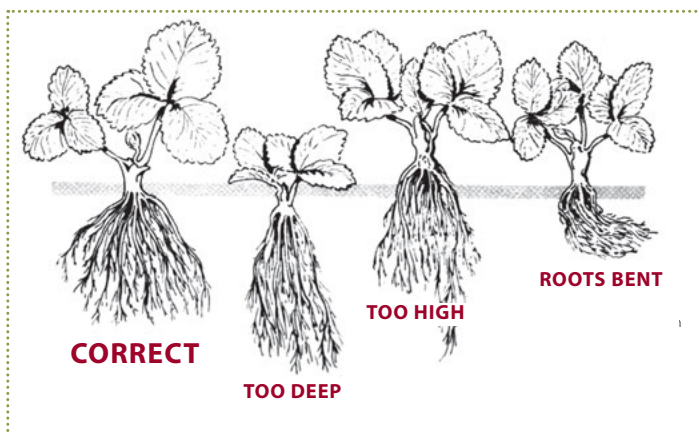
Planting

Plant as soon as possible in the spring, after the soil has warmed. Planting at the correct depth is very important. Dig a hole deeply enough that you are able to lower the plant into the ground without bending the roots. Set plants in the ground with the roots straight down. Make certain that the plants are set with the middle of the crown level with the top of the soil. We advise not to cut any of the roots off your plants.

Take care that soil is pressed firmly, but not hard-packed around the plant roots. Be sure not

cover the crown. Check the soil level within a week or so, as the soil will likely settle.

Avoid covering crowns with soil while you hoe, weed, and cultivate throughout the season.



Irrigation

Water thoroughly after planting and maintain good moisture throughout the season. Strawberries do best when they get 1"-2" of rainfall or equivalent irrigation each week, depending on soil type. If irrigation is not available, select a site with good water-holding capacity, but avoid wet soils. Strawberries do poorly under drought conditions.

Fertilization/Soil Preparation

Applying fertilizer near the planting date leads to burning of plant leaves and roots. Being too generous with fertilizer will also be detrimental. You may thoroughly incorporate 1 lb. of 10-10-10 per 100 sq. feet into the soil 2-3 weeks prior to planting. Otherwise, delay application to 6 weeks after planting or until plants are well established. Apply ½ lb 10-10-10 per 100 sq. feet at the end of July and again in early September to feed the fruit bud development for next year's crop. Thoroughly water in fertilizer after each application.

Weed Control & Mulching

Prepare your site prior to planting. Remove weeds throughout the growing season. After planting, weekly cultivation removes weeds when they are small so they do not have a chance to compete with your plants. A scuffle hoe works well for this type of work. Strawberry roots are shallow. Be careful not to damage the roots while you are removing weeds. Check with your local agricultural extension before using chemicals.



Proper mulching aids in weed control, while keeping fruit clean, conserving moisture, and adding humus to the soil. Mulch with a loose, acid-free and weed-free material such as salt hay or straw. Leaves are not recommended. They can mat, smothering plants and can harbor pests.

Preparing for Winter

Mulching is necessary in most northern states for winter protection of the crowns. Quick freezing and thawing can cause serious crown damage which may not only affect yield, but plant survival. An adequate layer of mulch mitigates fluctuating temperatures. Apply at least 4" of salt hay or straw after plants have started to go dormant or after 6-10 hard frosts. Remove mulch in early spring before new growth starts. You can move the mulch to the aisles to keep weeds at bay and keep mud from splashing onto the fruit. You must cover the plants with straw again if cold temperatures are forecasted. A frost blanket or row cover can provide some degree of protection in the spring also. They must be removed by the time plants begin to bloom.

June-Bearing Strawberries (Such as Jewel and Darselect)

Establishment Year

Pinch off all the flower buds in the first year of growth. This allows plants to put energy into becoming established and in turn, yield a larger crop the first bearing year. It will also encourage runner production and support winter survival. Fill in the rows by allowing 2 or 3 daughters (runners) to take root on each side of the mother plant. Evenly space the plantlets in the bed, lightly pressing them into the soil to make sure there is good soil contact around their roots. Cut off any additional runners that form during the season. Over-crowded beds will produce small berries and can have more disease problems. Customers with limited spacing and interest in planting a double row, should refer to our commercial Plasticulture Guide for management practices.

Succeeding Years and Renovation

A process called 'renovation' is performed on June-bearing strawberry beds immediately after the harvest. This helps to keep plants healthy and productive over the years.

- **Do not renovate in the establishment year.**

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- As soon as all the berries have been harvested, mow off the leaves or clip them to about 3" tall. Use your lawn mower set at the highest setting and collect the clippings in the mower bag or rake them off to help reduce disease. Take care not to cut or injure the crowns!
- Rototill the edges of the beds to narrow the bed width to 12"-18".
- Reduce crowding in the bed. Remove some plants, leaving 3-5" between remaining plants. Try to retain strong runner plants and remove the mother plants when they are 3-4 years old.
- We recommend application of 1½ lbs of 10-10-10 per 100 sq. feet at renovation, watering it in thoroughly. Side dress again in late July and early September, as in the establishment year. Thoroughly water in fertilizer after each application.
- Complete the renovation process with a good watering to get new growth off to a good start. Continue to maintain adequate moisture through the remainder of the growing season.



Everbearing/Day-Neutral Strawberries (Such as Evie-2 and Seascape)

Establishment Year

- Day-neutral varieties can be planted in a single row with 12" between plants. Alternatively, arrange a staggered double row in a 12"-18" wide bed with 12" between plants. Maintain 42" aisles.
- We suggest ½ lb.-1 lb. of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 sq. ft. be worked into the soil at least 2-3 weeks before planting. Otherwise wait 8-10 weeks before fertilizing.
- Pinch off all the flowers for 3 weeks after setting out your plants.
- We recommend that you remove all the runners during the first year. This will allow the plants to become well established. You can let the plants develop fruit midsummer through October.
- **Do not renovate day-neutral or everbearing strawberries.**
- Four weeks after planting, side-dress with 1lb. 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 sq. ft. After 8 weeks, begin weekly or biweekly application of a soluble fertilizer like Miracle-Gro or Jacks Classic to maintain strong growth and fruit production.



Notes: Hot weather will impact strawberry production. With day-neutrals, the impact can be tempered with good watering practices. The cooler temperatures of autumn will bring a return of berry size and yield.

You can expect a bed of day-neutral plants to be productive for 1-2 years.