



## How to Grow Strawberries

Generally, strawberries lack self-control and will send out runners making new plants throughout your garden. So be sure to allow enough room for your strawberry patch as well as some gentle discipline to control its wandering ways. Your reward will be strawberries with flavor that far exceeds their supermarket counterparts.

### *At a Glance*

**Sun:** Full sun is best; will tolerate partial shade

**Soil-Garden:** Fertile, well-drained

**Pots:** Good quality potting soil

**Water:** Moderate-1 inch of water per week when producing, less when not in fruit production

**Fertilizer:** If garden soil is well amended, or if using good quality potting mix in a container, fertilize only if growth is weak or leaves are light green.

**Where to plant:** Strawberries prefer fertile, well-drained soil enriched with plenty of compost or well-aged manure.

Although tolerant of partial shade, strawberry plants do best in full sun, protected from the wind.

**When to plant:** Bare root strawberries are planted in early spring, which is late March to April in our area. Starter plants can be planted from mid-April on.

**How to Grow:** Strawberries are fussy about planting depth. The middle of the crown should be level with the soil. If planted too deep, the plant rots, too shallow and the plant dehydrates. Space plants 12-18 inches apart in rows 3-4 feet apart. Keep the soil moist and free of weeds. A layer of mulch helps retain moisture and suppress weeds. Remove any blossoms the first year so the plants use all their energy to grow roots and hearty foliage. If growth is weak or leaves are light green, fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer in June, July, and August.

Pick strawberries every other day during the peak of the season. Harvest the berries when they are fully red but before they are a very dark red.

In late fall, mulch the plants with 2 inches of clean straw. In early spring, start checking the plants under the mulch for growth. As growth begins, pull the mulch away from the plants slightly, allowing sunlight onto the plants. As the season progresses the mulch may remain on the soil to aid moisture retention and keep the strawberries off the ground.

### Varieties:

**Junebearers:** Prized for their large, fragrant fruit and intense flavor. Produces one large crop per season, in late June or early July. The downside is that if a spring frost damages the blossoms, little or no crop will be produced until the following year. Suggested variety: **Honeoye**.

**Everbearing:** Produces two crops, one in early summer and the other in the fall. Very hardy and reliable. Berries are smaller than Junebearers. Suggested varieties: **Quinault** and **Ft. Laramie**.



**Day Neutral:** Flower and fruit on six week cycles over the summer. Blossoming will slow or stop during hot weather. Popular for a light daily harvest for most of the summer and fall. Needs constant, light fertilization and regular removal of runners. Suggested varieties: **Tristar and Eversweet.**