



Growing Strawberries

Why Grow Strawberries?

- If you care for plants properly, you can obtain enough berries for your family from a relatively small area.
- Strawberry plantings can remain productive for 3 or 4 fruiting years.

Types of Strawberries

- June-bearers – Produce only one crop per year, mainly in June. Examples include Hood, Totem, Benton, Sweet Sunrise and Tillamook. They produce many runners.
- Everbearers – Produce two crops, one in June or July and the other in the fall. Examples include Quinault and Fort Laramie. They produce few runners.
- Day-neutrals – Produce fruit almost continuously through the growing season except when it is very hot. These are the best type for the home garden and containers. Examples include Albion, Seascape, Selva, Tristar and Tribute.

Selecting a Site

- Full sun is needed for best production and fruit quality.
- To minimize insect and disease problems, rotate the site each time you make a new planting (every 3 to 4 years).
- Avoid planting where tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, eggplants, strawberries, raspberries or blackberries have grown in the past 3 years. These plants can be the hosts for fungi that cause diseases, such as *Verticillium* wilt, for your strawberries.

Preparing the Soil

- Best: A raised bed of well-drained loamy soil, high in organic matter that has a pH between 5.6 and 6.5
- Avoid: Planting in heavy clay soils. If the only soil available has poor drainage, you may be able to improve it by adding organic matter.

Planting Systems

There are two systems: Matted-row and Hill systems.

- Hill system — For day-neutrals: set plants 12 to 15 inches apart in double- or triple-wide rows and leaving 1½ to 2 feet wide aisles between.
- Matted-row system — For June-bearers: set plants about 15 inches apart in the row with 3 to 4 feet between rows to produce a 1.5-foot-wide mat of plants.

Planting

- Purchase certified disease-free plants. Do not plant runners from your old patch or your neighbor's.
- Plant as early as you can work the soil in spring.
- Planting depth is very important for strawberries. At planting, dig a hole for each plant large enough to accommodate the roots without bending them. Spread the root mass and set the plant at the same depth it was in the nursery container; with bare root plants, be sure the midpoint of the crown is level with the soil surface.

- June-bearers produce very little fruit in the planting year, and it is best to remove any blossoms that come on during the first summer so as not to stress the plants. With day-neutrals, remove only the first flush of flowers that come up immediately after planting. Day-neutrals will produce a baby crop that 1st summer. All types will be in full production the year after planting.

Fertilizing

- Observe plant growth: Pale green or yellow leaves and poor runner growth may indicate nitrogen (N) deficiency.
- In the planting year, fertilize plants with a well-balanced fertilizer such as 16-16-16 or an organic product. For a 100-ft row, apply 2 ounces of nitrogen (N) one or two weeks after planting. This is equivalent to 13 ounces of 16-16-16 (2 ounces/0.16). Apply another 2 ounces of N one month later (late May) and another 0.5 to 1 ounce of N in late June.
- For established strawberries, fertilization timing depends on the type grown. For June-bearers fertilize after harvest. Cut the old leaves off about 1 to 2 weeks after last fruit harvest then apply 4 ounces of N per 100-ft row, spreading it evenly over the entire row length and width. Irrigate right after fertilizing. For day-neutral cultivars apply N throughout most of the growing and fruiting season; apply 1 ounce of N per 100-ft row in EACH of early April, May, June, and July, and consider applying an additional 1 ounce of N in August if plant vigor is moderate to good.

Irrigation

- 1 to 1.5 inches of water per week during the growing season. Don't subject plants to drought stress.

Weed Management

- Weeds compete with plants for water and nutrients, so keep weeds out of plantings by removing them by hand. If you grow day-neutral cultivars in the hill system, you can use plastic mulch with irrigation system, such as drip, underneath.

Pests and Diseases

- The most serious disease problems of strawberries are *Botrytis*, fruit rot, root rot, and *Verticillium* wilt.
- Insect problems include root weevil, aphid, spider mite, and crown moth.

OSU Extension Service Resources

Visit your OSU Extension Service online at <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/>

- *Growing Strawberries in Your Home Garden* EC 1307
- *Strawberry Cultivars for Western Oregon and Washington* EC 1618
- *Growing Berries on the Oregon Coast: Strawberries* EM 9178 (Also applies to Willamette Valley)

Master Gardener™ Advice

- Call Home Horticulture Helpline: 503-655-8631 (Clackamas County), 503-821-1150 (Washington County), 503-445-4608 (Multnomah County).
- For other 10-Minute University™ handouts and class schedule, visit www.cmastergardeners.org or www.metromastergardeners.org.
- Look for Master Gardeners at area Farmers' Markets.

Oregon State University Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities, and materials on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, genetic information, veteran's status, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs).