

STRAWBERRIES



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The best time to plant strawberries is from mid-April to early May. This early planting will establish the plants before summer heat sets in and will give the strawberries a head start against weeds.

Strawberries do best in well-drained soil. Work the soil to a depth of 6"-8". Add peat moss and manure and form a level bed. Plant bareroot strawberries as soon as possible after purchase. If there will be a delay, store the plants in a refrigerator. Soak the roots immediately before planting.

There are two methods used when planting strawberries - the matted row method or the hill method. In the matted row method, place the plants 18" apart in rows. Let runners develop so that you end up with 5-7 "babies" per plant, spaced about 6" apart. If you use the hill method, place the plants about 18" apart but don't let any runners develop. This method is good for producing larger, but fewer berries or for use with everbearing varieties (those that produce a large crop in the spring and a smaller crop in the fall as opposed to Junebearing which gives you one big crop in the spring.)

Whichever method you choose, set the plants in the ground deep enough so that the roots are entirely covered but do not cover the crown. The soil level should be right at the bottom of the crown. Press soil firmly around the roots and water frequently (about 1 1/2" per week including rain).

Several weeks after planting, blossoms will appear. Pinch these off of Junebearing varieties the first year or until mid-July in everbearing varieties. This will develop stronger plants. Once the plants become well-established (6-8 weeks after planting), use a light side dressing of 10-10-10 or similar fertilizer. Also fertilize in September.

To protect the fruit and keep it clean, use straw mulch or a layer of landscape fabric with slits cut for each plant. If birds, rabbits, or woodchucks are a problem, fencing or netting will be necessary. For insect and disease control, spray when the blossom buds first appear. Then spray every 7-10 days until harvest. A premixed fruit tree spray will provide good results. Follow label directions, especially concerning spraying before harvest.

Apply 4" of mulch (i.e., straw) in the fall before the temperatures get below 20 degrees (usually early November). Remove the mulch in stages the following spring.



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