

Strawberries

Planting & Growing Guide

Soil Preparation Strawberries require a loose, loamy, slightly acidic soil (pH 6.0–6.5) and full sun to achieve peak berry quality, but they will tolerate a variety of soil conditions as long as they have adequate drainage. Prepare your strawberry beds by turning under high quality animal manure or plant residue-based compost. Compost composed of cedar or redwood is not an acceptable substitute for high quality compost.

Heeling In When your Bare Root stock arrives, open the plastic bags immediately. It is best to plant right away, within a week of delivery. If you cannot plant right away, you may “heel in” the plants to protect them and keep them alive (but still dormant) until planting in the permanent spot.

To heel in Bare Root plants *outside*, pick a location that is shielded from wind. Dig a trench about twice as deep as the roots are long, with one side of the trench sloping at a 45 degree angle. Place the plants, roots side down, so that the trunks/stems are supported by the sloping side. Cover the roots with soil or sand and gently tamp down to avoid air pockets. Periodically check the root area, keeping the soil moist.

To heel in Bare Root plants *inside* due to snow or frozen ground outside, you can store them in a cool place like a root cellar, basement, or garage. It's important choose a place where the temperature stays between 38 and 45 degrees F. This is important so the plants neither suffer frost damage, nor break dormancy. Place the roots in a container with soil or sand and be sure to keep the root area moist.

Planting & Growing When you are ready to plant, put the transplants in a bucket of water for a few minutes to rehydrate them and to keep them from drying out in the wind and sun. Dig each hole deep enough so that the transplant roots will not be bent or “j-rooted” when covered with soil. Next, prepare a soil cone at the bottom of the hole for the roots to rest upon when buried, keeping the roots as straight as possible. Finally, fill the hole with loose soil, keeping the upper crown bud at or slightly above the soil line, as plants will die if the crowns are completely covered. Once planted,

strawberries will spread by producing “runners” where leaf cluster tips touch the ground. Consider planting into black or red weed fabric, especially the Everbearer or Day Neutral varieties. Give all strawberry varieties 1” of water per week, preferably using drip-type irrigation to minimize berry spoilage and keep the beds thoroughly weeded!

After the first frost, mulch beds with straw or agricultural fabrics (ie “Floating Row Cover” or Frost Blankets). Where snow remains on the ground throughout the winter, no mulching is required. When the ground warms in spring, remove any organic mulches, but leave agricultural fabrics on until the first flowers appear; fabrics will speed growth but prevent pollination if left on during blossoming. Strawberries are prone to diseases caused by overly moist soil conditions and overcrowding. Soil must be kept loose and well drained, plants must be properly spaced and ripe or moldy fruit picked daily. Snails and slugs can be a significant problem, but are controlled using traps and copper strip-barriers. Protect against birds with netting, scare balloons and flash tape.

June Bearers generally produce a single large crop in spring to early summer, as early as March in warmer regions such as Southern California and Florida. They are prolific producers for 3 to 4 weeks, and are a good choice for growers who want to limit their growing season for marketing or home processing reasons.

Since June Bearers spread their runners very rapidly, many growers consider the “matted row method” to be the most effective means of propagation. Rows are spaced 3’–4’ apart with berry plants spaced at 18”–24” apart. Plants are then allowed to “runner” freely in all directions, creating larger rows centered on the original mother plants, all flowers should be removed the first year of growth to allow for maximum runner spread. Fruit production will occur the second year from the runners. A post-harvest regime of mowing plants down to 2” and tilling to within 10” of the original row will extend bed life for up to 3 years. Tilling up the original row, and leaving second or third generation plants to form new rows can extend bed life even longer.

Peaceful
Valley®
Farm & Garden Supply
Grow organic...for life!

P.O. Box 2209 • 125 Clydesdale Court • Grass Valley, CA 95945
Order Toll-Free (888) 784-1722 • Fax (530) 272-4794
Entire contents © 2012 Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, Inc.
All rights reserved. December 22, 2011

Shop our 5000+ product line for all your gardening needs at:

www.GrowOrganic.com

Find “How-to” videos, jam-packed informative articles on our blog, printable growing guides, garden fresh recipes, our Garden Calculator, and all the latest GrowOrganic news at our Organic Gardening Resource Center:

www.GrowOrganic.com/organic-gardening



[Facebook.com/GrowOrganic](https://www.facebook.com/GrowOrganic) [Twitter.com/GrowOrganicCom](https://twitter.com/GrowOrganicCom) [YouTube.com/GrowOrganic](https://www.youtube.com/GrowOrganic)

Ever Bearers are most productive in northern areas where summer brings extended daylight hours. These varieties are not as prolific as June Bearers but are especially suitable for growers who wish to harvest an intermittent supply of berries in the summer. Also, you will get fruit the first year after planting, unlike June Bearers. Many growers prefer to use the “Hill System,” for Ever Bearers, which produce few runners. Space plants 12” - 15” apart in double or triple wide rows with 1.5’ to 2’ between rows. Remove the first set of flowers after planting, and pull up all runners throughout spring and summer to increase fruit production. Keeping these varieties trimmed of old, decaying foliage will allow better air circulation across the bed and result in high berry quality. Allow runners to develop in the second season to establish a new generation of plants; production of the original mother plants will decrease after the second season. After the second year’s harvest, pull out the mother plants, leaving only new plants spaced on the original bedding plan.

Day Neutral Strawberries bear fruit from late winter until early Fall in temperate areas, and from early summer until the first frost in cold climates. These varieties are very prolific but are also more temperamental about their growing conditions than the other varieties; they fare poorly against heat, dry soil and competition from weeds. Since Day Neutral varieties send out few runners, they should be cared for the same way as Ever Bearers (ie. the “Hill System”).

Harvesting It is important to practice proper “picking hygiene” when harvesting berries as disease can be easily spread if good fruit is handled after bad fruit. Always wash hands after removing moldy, deformed or over-ripe fruit and before harvesting your good berries. Pick ripe strawberries by pinching through the stem above the fruit. Never pull on the berry itself. All strawberries will last several days under refrigeration

Dormant Nursery Stock Limited Replacement Guarantee

We guarantee that our product(s) will arrive in good, viable condition. If your dormant bare-root stock (including potted fig and pomegranate), kiwi, grape, artichoke, asparagus, horseradish, rhubarb, or (straw/rasp/black/blue/boysen)berry does not leaf out, contact our Customer Service Department *on or before June 1st* and return the plant for inspection. We will issue you a credit for the price you paid for that plant (excluding freight) provided it does not show damage (rodent, mechanical, etc.) or root rot. This credit is redeemable toward the purchase of any other bare-root item of your choice the following year (Note: we reserve the right to not issue credit for replacement of already replaced items.) **This limited replacement guarantee does not apply to flower bulbs, citrus trees, potato seeds, olive trees, garlic, native plants, or conifer seedlings.**

Limitation of Remedy

We warrant to the extent of the purchase price only that the seeds or plants sold hereunder are as described on the label within recognized tolerances. No other warranty is given, expressed or implied, of (1) the merchantability or fitness of the seeds or plants for any particular purpose, or (2) against loss due to any cause. We cannot accept any responsibility for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions (soil preparation, fertilization, weed and pest control, temperature control, irrigation...etc.) that must be met to insure the success of your crop(s) or plants.