

Strawberry: *Fragaria ananassa*

A few pointers to get you started on your strawberry crop:

Most strawberry plants are either June-bearing or Ever-bearing. June-bearing varieties produce from May to early June for about 2-3 weeks. While you only get one season of harvest, both the berries and the yield are large. Since all fruit matures at once, this type is ideal for canning or baking. Ever-bearing varieties produce smaller fruit and smaller yields but can be harvested all summer long. They are the perfect option for snacking and great in containers and hanging baskets.

- ❖ March or April is the best time to plant strawberries. Good, well-draining soils are a must, so first till up the top 4-6 inches and add Cotton Boll compost.
- ❖ Planting depth is critical! The soil level should be right at the bottom of the crown – too shallow and the plants will dry out, too deep and the plants will smother. Make sure roots are spread out and covered completely with soil.
- ❖ Water consistently through spring and summer. Usually one inch of water per week is sufficient, however plants may need more while getting established and in the heat of summer.
- ❖ Fertilize in fall and early spring with Chickity-Doo-Doo.
- ❖ Mulch plants to conserve water; cool roots and keep ripe berries clean and off the ground. Straw is the traditional mulch for strawberry patches.

For a permanent bed of strawberries, plant starts 18" apart in rows 4' apart. Pinching off flowers the first year, while eliminating this year's harvest, will encourage faster growth with more runners the better berry yields and following season.

If you have limited yard space plant strawberries in a strawberry pot and place on your porch.

June-bearing: Larger fruits, bigger yields. Great for pies and jams since all fruit matures at once.

- ❖ Honeoye
- ❖ Sequioa

Ever-bearing: Smaller fruits, smaller yields. Better for strawberry pots and hanging baskets. Great for snacking a few at a time.

- ❖ Ozark Beauty
- ❖ Eversweet



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