

Strawberries like full sun and a well-drained soil rich in organic matter. If your space is limited, they can be used as a border or groundcover for perennial beds, or planted in containers. They love hanging baskets! When planting in the ground, plant about 12" apart.

To prevent diseases, it is best not to plant strawberries where tomatoes, potatoes, bulbs, or peppers have been grown. Strawberry beds typically need to be replanted every several years to maintain vigor and production.

In general, you can expect about half a pound of berries per plant. 15 plants will yield 12-18 quarts of berries under good cultural conditions.

VARIETIES

SPRING CROP VARIETIES

Spring crop (June-bearing) varieties produce one crop per year around June. You can expect a very heavy crop over a short period of time, making these varieties an excellent choice if you like to freeze berries or to make jams and jellies. For best results, remove all flowers the first year to encourage vigorous growth. After flower/berry production has stopped, cut back foliage to just above the crowns. A lawn mower can be used for large beds. In the fall, thin runners so they are 3 to 5 inches apart. If possible, mow or trim tops off in January or February prior to the spring flush of growth.

EVERBEARING (TWO CROP) & DAY NEUTRAL VARIETIES

Everbearing (two crop) varieties produce two crops per year, in June and again in late summer to fall. The fall crop is generally larger. These varieties will give you a nice supply of berries for eating fresh in June and a heavier crop in the fall for jams and jellies. Day neutral varieties are often called "everbearing" because they will give you a continuous, slow and steady crop from summer to fall. (The two-crop strawberry varieties had snagged the name "everbearing" before the first day-neutral ones were developed.) For garden-to-mouth snacking all summer long, grow day neutral types!

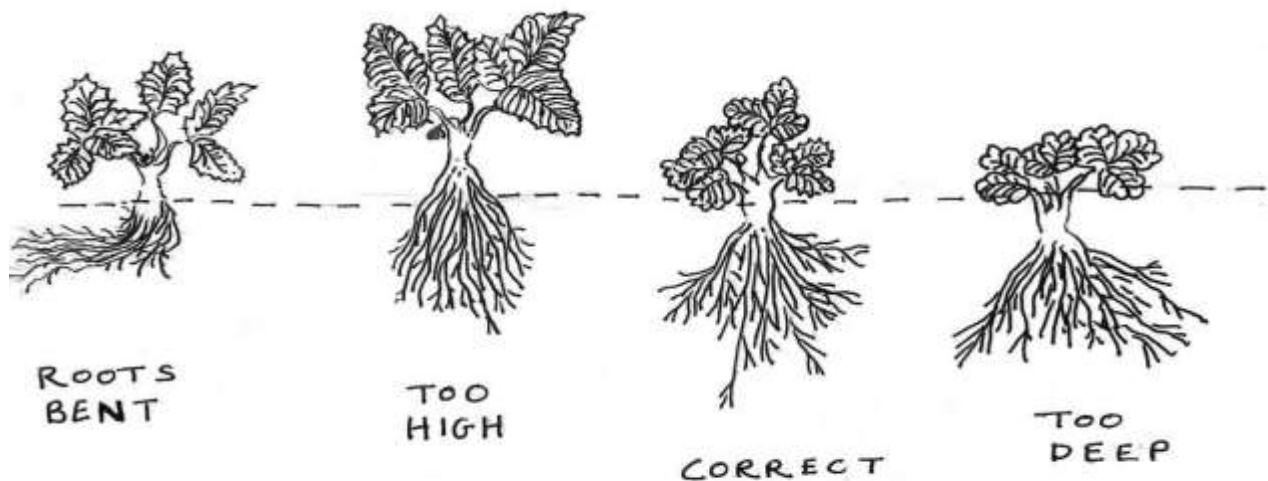
For both, remove all blossoms the first spring until the middle of June, then let them have a fall crop. Clip off all runners for the first year to promote larger fruit.

ALPINE STRAWBERRIES

Alpine strawberries are a type of everbearing European wild strawberry, with tiny (1/2" – 3/4") pinecone-shaped berries with concentrated flavor and aroma. Most varieties produce red berries, but some may be white or yellow. Alpine strawberries do not usually produce runners. They can be tucked into the edge of a bed or in a planter where they make a nice slow-spreading groundcover. Alpine strawberries tolerate some shade; however they produce best when given full sun, rich soil, and yearly feeding.

PLANTING

Potted strawberries are planted like any other container plants—just be sure to keep the plant crown at the same level as in the pots. When planting bareroot plants, place the crown just above soil level and spread the roots out evenly. The crown is the point at which the leaves emerge. Just below the crown is an area called the “collar.” The planting level should be about the middle of this collar or solid band. Planting depth is critical: if the crown is buried the plant will rot; if the roots below the collar are exposed, the plant will dry out.



MULCHING

Mulch with compost to discourage weeds and conserve moisture. You can also add a layer of straw to help keep berries off the ground.

FERTILIZING

Fertilize with an organic all-purpose or berry fertilizer when planting. Fertilize in early spring and again in early summer (after harvest, for spring crop and two crop varieties) with an all-purpose or berry organic fertilizer. Spring crop varieties should also be mowed or sheared at this time to stimulate next year's fruit set – but be careful not to damage the crowns.

THINNING

Most strawberry varieties produce abundant runners. Thin new plants periodically in summer and fall to about 4-5" apart, leaving only the largest and healthiest crowns.