



GEORGINA



RECREATION AT HOME

Planting, Growing and Harvesting Strawberries

[The Old Farmer's Almanac](#)

If you plan to enter the world of growing fruit, strawberries are one of the easiest fruit to grow and great for beginners. Plus, homegrown strawberries are far more flavourful than what you'll ever find in a grocery store. Why? The sugar in berries converts to starch soon after it's picked. Learn more about growing strawberries in the home garden.

The good news is that strawberries are relatively easy to grow if you keep them in a location that gets full sun.

Strawberry plants come in three types:

1. June-bearing varieties bear all at once usually over a period of three weeks. Day-length sensitive, these varieties produce buds in the autumn, flowers, and fruits the following June, and runners during the long days of summer. Although called "June-bearing" or "June-bearers," these strawberries bear earlier than June in warmer climates.
2. Ever-bearing varieties produce a big crop in spring, produce lightly in the summer, and then bear another crop in late summer/fall. These varieties form buds during the long days of summer and the short days of autumn. The summer-formed buds flower and fruit in autumn, and the autumn-formed buds fruit the following spring.
3. Day-Neutral varieties produce fruit continuously through the season until the first frost: Insensitive to day length, these varieties produce buds, fruits, and runners continuously if temperature remains between 1° to 30°C (35° and 85°F). Production is less than that of June-bearers.



For the home garden, we recommend June-bearers. Although you will have to wait a year for fruit harvesting, it will be well worth it.

When to Plant Strawberries

- Plan to plant as soon as the ground can be worked in the spring. See your local frost dates.
- Establish new plants each year to keep berry quality high each season.
- Buy disease-resistant plants from a reputable nursery, of a variety recommended in your area.

Choosing and Preparing a Planting Site

- Strawberry plants require 6-10 hours a day of direct sunlight, so choose your planting site accordingly.
- Strawberries are tolerant of different soil types, although they prefer loam. Ideally, begin working in aged manure or compost a couple months before planting. If you have clay soil, generally mix in 4 inches or more of compost, and rake the clay soil into raised mounds to further improve drainage. If your soil is sandy, simply cultivate to remove weeds, and mix in a 1-inch layer of rich compost or rotted manure.
- Soil pH should be between 5.5 and 7. If necessary, amend your soil in advance of planting. If soils in your area are naturally alkaline, it is best to grow strawberries in half-barrels or other large containers filled with compost-enriched potting soil.
- The planting site must be well-drained. Raised beds are a particularly good option for strawberry plants.
- Practice crop rotation for the most success. Do not plant in a site that recently had strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, or eggplant.

How to Plant Strawberries

- Provide adequate space for sprawling. Set plants out 20 inches apart to leave room for runners and leave 4 feet between rows. Strawberries are sprawling plants. Seedlings will send out runners, or 'daughter' plants, which in turn will send out their own runners.
- Roots shouldn't be longer than 8 inches when plants are set out. Trim them if necessary.
- Make planting holes deep and wide enough to accommodate the entire root system without bending it. However, don't plant too deep! The roots should be covered, but the crown should be right at the soil surface. It is very important that you do NOT bury the crown (central growing bud) of the plant or it could rot! The leaves, flowers, and fruit must be exposed to light and fresh air.
- Water plants well at the time of planting.

How to Grow Strawberries

- Keep the beds mulched to reduce water needs and weed invasion. Any type of mulch—from black plastic to pine straw to shredded leaves—will keep the soil moist and the plants clean. Read more about mulching.
- Be diligent about weeding. Weed by hand, especially in the first months after planting.
- Moisture is incredibly important due to shallow roots. Water adequately, about one inch per week. Strawberry plants need a lot of water when the runners and flowers are developing and again in the fall when the plants are mature.
- Fertilize with all-purpose granules for strong growth. In warm weather, berries ripen about 30 days after blossoms are fertilized.
- In the first year, pick off blossoms to discourage strawberry plants from fruiting. If not allowed to bear fruit, they will spend their food reserves on developing healthy roots. The yields will be much greater in the second year.
- Eliminate daughter plants as needed. First and second generations produce higher yields. Try to keep daughter plants spaced about 10 inches apart.
- Row covers are a good option for protecting blossoms and fruit from birds.

How to Harvest Strawberries

- Fruit is typically ready for harvesting 4-6 weeks after blossoming.
- Harvest only fully red (ripe) berries, and pick every three days.
- Cut by the stem; do not pull the berry or you could damage the plant.
- For June-bearer strawberries, the harvest will last up to 3 weeks. You should have an abundance of berries, depending on the variety.

How to Store Strawberries

- Store unwashed berries in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days.
- Strawberries can be frozen whole for about 2 months.

Resources:

[https://www.almanac.com/plant/strawberries?trk_msg=4KAH1ELVDAD4R8K9QKDPSFTIBG&trk_contact=1N6LJGQSDKA81M2ITKDIC3AK4O&trk_sid=9K0708F12I3L2FNFQ3973PQCH4&utm_source=Listrak&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=Strawberries+\(title\)&utm_campaign=Companion+Daily](https://www.almanac.com/plant/strawberries?trk_msg=4KAH1ELVDAD4R8K9QKDPSFTIBG&trk_contact=1N6LJGQSDKA81M2ITKDIC3AK4O&trk_sid=9K0708F12I3L2FNFQ3973PQCH4&utm_source=Listrak&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=Strawberries+(title)&utm_campaign=Companion+Daily)