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Guide to Growing Strawberries

There are two main varieties of strawberries: June bearing and ever bearing. June bearers produce one high yielding crop per year, early in the summer. This one large crop makes them ideal for canning and freezing. Ever bearers produce two crops each year; the first in late June/early July, and the second in the early fall. Ever bearers are ideal for summer-long snacking.

Soil Prep and Planting

Strawberries grow best in an area with full sun and fertile, well draining soil. Adding compost to the area before planting is recommended. For good drainage, it is suggested to plant in a raised bed to help the plants stay free of any root rot issues, 10"-12" inches is ideal.

Space the plants 12"-18" apart. Plant with the roots straight down and the middle of the crown set level with the top of the soil. Top dress the plant with a natural fertilizer two weeks after planting to help the roots get established.

Care: June Bearing

With June bearers, you will be rewarded with a much larger crop the second growing season if you allow them to establish their roots the first growing season. Do this by removing flowers for the entirety of the growing season. To maintain the plant, after the crop has been harvested, cut the foliage back 2" above the crown and remove the extra debris. In mid to late July, trim off all but 2-3 runners from the mother plant; a helpful rule is to remove all runners that have not rooted by the 1st of September. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer in late summer to encourage fall plant growth.

Care: Ever Bearing

With ever bearing varieties, it is only necessary to remove the first flush of flowers, allowing for root establishment. After July 1st, all new flowers can be left to mature into fruit. As with the June bearers, it is a good idea to trim off any runners that have not rooted by September 1st. Fertilize ever bearing strawberry plants in small amounts throughout the season with a balanced fertilizer.

Keep in Mind:

Strawberries are shallow rooted and require extra watering, especially during their first growing year.

Cover the plants with floating row cover if the temperature dips below freezing to avoid any flower damage.