

Strawberry Plants Growing Guide

Unpack your strawberries as soon as possible. For best results plant within 24 hours and avoid planting in areas where potatoes have previously been grown to reduce infection by Verticillium Wilt. Strawberries will grow in any well drained soil in a sunny, sheltered spot. Remove any of last years foliage, leaving just the new green foliage.

Growing Strawberries in the Ground

- Dig over the plot to remove all weeds and add some good quality compost or general purpose fertilizer to the soil.
- Soak the roots in water for an hour prior to planting.
- Make a planting hole large enough to enable the roots to be spread out and downwards and with the crown at or slightly above soil level. Do not twist the roots round when planting, trim them back slightly if you need to.
- Plant 13-15in (35-40cm) apart within the row and rows 30in (75cm) apart.
- To help plants establish and produce fruit it is essential to keep the area well watered and free from weeds.
- To prevent damage by rain splashes and to keep fruit clean, lay straw or a mulch material such as weed matting between the rows, around the plants and under the fruit trusses before they ripen. This will also suppress weeds.
- It is advisable to remove runners (young plants growing from the main crown) as they develop, to allow the plant to develop strong roots and fruiting crown during the first year.
- Pick fruit as soon as it has ripened to prevent any rotting on the plant.

Growing Strawberries in a Container

Strawberry plants can easily be grown in a containers and Hanging Baskets.

- Good drainage is essential, strawberries hate wet feet - place a layer of broken terracotta pots or polystyrene in the bottom of a large container.
- Fill with compost allowing enough room for the roots to be spread out, (it is beneficial to add water retaining granules and slow release fertiliser to the planting compost). Top up with compost shaking the plants gently to distribute compost evenly around the roots and make sure there are no air pockets. Firm the compost around the plants. Do not twist the roots round when planting, trim them back slightly if you need to.
- Water well and place in a sunny, sheltered position.
- Keep regularly watered especially in hot weather and while fruit is forming. Never allow them to dry out as this can damage the plants and seriously affect fruiting.
- If no slow release fertiliser was added to the compost, feed weekly with a liquid tomato feed during flowering and fruiting.

Where To Grow

Frost is the first thought when considering where to grow strawberry plants in your garden. They are very hardy plants during the winter but are not so hardy when they burst into life in spring. Strawberries produces flowers early in the Spring and because they are close to the ground, it is important to position strawberries where they have least risk of frost.

If you follow these simple steps you will be enjoying your own deliciously sweet and juicy strawberries in the summer!

If you wish to keep your strawberries to fruit again next year - cut back the dead foliage in autumn. For pot grown plants keep the roots frost free by covering the pot with fleece or bubble-wrap. Reduce watering over winter but do not allow to completely dry out.

In spring begin watering again and feed regularly with a liquid tomato feed.

Plants should give 3-4 years of fruits after which they should replaced to avoid disease problems.

