

# Growing Strawberries For The Home Garden

Have a bountiful harvest this season!



Growing a strawberry patch may be one of the most satisfying items to grow. Not only will strawberries start producing edible berries in a relatively short amount of time; the general maintenance of strawberry plants is relatively low after the plants are established!

## Plant Selection

Selecting the correct strawberry plant type will lead to success of growing strawberries. The most commonly available strawberry types are everbearing, day neutral and Junebearing.

- Everbearing- produce 2 main crops of strawberries. One in the spring and another late summer.
- Day neutral- produces fruit throughout the growing season.
- Junebearing- produces one large crop in June/July

If you are looking for a large crop for processing, Junebearing may be your best choice to ensure enough fruit at one time.

## Planting

Strawberries require at least 6 hours of direct sunlight for production (closer to 10 hours is better). The soil should be well drained, and rich in organic matter. Tilling in compost will help with drainage, and microbial activity in the soil. Prepare rows 2-3 feet apart and plant each plant about 18" apart. The plant should be planted to the depth of being in the middle of the crown of the plant. Water the plants immediately after planting.

If you are planning on planting your strawberries in containers, keep in mind they will not reliably overwinter in northern South Dakota.



## Strawberry Plant Care

Post planting, continue watering the plants so they receive about 1" of water a week. Pinch any flowers that grow the first 2-3 weeks after planting. This will help promote root establishment and less energy toward fruit growth. Runners will start to grow especially on Junebearing plants. Thin them to reduce over crowding as needed. Any wanted runners should be moved to where you want them to root in.

As fruit starts to ripen, pick the fruit ultimately picking all fruit when the harvest is done to have clean plants. After harvest is done, take out any plants that are crowding, especially older woody plants. Fertilize with a nitrogen rich fertilizer such as Bone Meal or *Espoma Garden Food* 10-10-10

In late fall, spread a blanket of straw over the entire strawberry bed. The next spring after snow and ice has melted, the straw can be taken away. If you wish to reuse the straw, it can be put left between the plants for a natural mulch.