

**1208
Strawberries**

Strawberry plants are either June-bearers, ever-bearers or day-neutrals, depending on how the fruit grows on the plant. June-bearers fruit over several weeks in the spring, usually in June. Guardian and Honeoye are good June-bearing varieties. Ever-bearers have two major fruiting cycles with additional limited fruit production throughout the growing season. Quinalt and Fort Laramie are dependable varieties in this area. Ever-bearers are considered hardier than June-bearers. Day-neutral varieties, developed from genetic material found in the Rocky Mountains, fruit in six-week cycles [](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/1208f1a.html)with three or more cycles throughout the growing season. Tribute and Tristar are good day-neutral varieties.

Plant strawberries away from wind where they will get full sunlight for at least eight hours a day. Avoid planting strawberries in soils which have had raspberries, cherries, tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants or peppers growing in them within the past five years. These Crops may have been infected with diseases that can affect strawberries.

Plant strawberries 12 to 24 inches apart in rows 42 inches apart. A solid mat of plants will form. It is important to place the crown of the plant, where the leaves attach to the root, just above the soil. If planted too low, the plant will rot; if too high, the plant will dry out. In the first year, remove the flowers to encourage the [](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/1208f2a.html)development of the plant.

Drip irrigation will conserve water and keep the foliage dry. Overhead watering can lead to an increase in diseases such as leaf spot. Birds, which eat ripe fruit, can be controlled with one-quarter to one-half inch plastic mesh netting over the strawberry bed.

Mulch, such as clear or black plastic sheeting, can discourage some insects, conserve moisture, moderate temperatures, decrease erosion and reduce weeds. Cover the soil with the plastic and plant the strawberries in holes cut in the plastic. In warmer climates, plastic mulch may need to be covered with an organic mulch to prevent burns on the foliage. In the winter, two inches of straw over the plants after the ground freezes will help protect against damage.