

STRAWBERRIES

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO A PATCH THAT MULTIPLIES

CROWNS, RUNNERS, RENOVATION - AND WHY SIX PLANTS BECOME SIXTY.

Strawberries are small plants with a surprisingly complicated calendar. Get the type, crown depth, water, runners, and renovation right and the patch can feed you for years. Get them wrong and you mostly grow leaves, rot, and disappointment.

THE BERRY IS THE REWARD. THE PATCH IS THE SYSTEM.

01 Learn the plant before you manage the patch.

A strawberry is an herbaceous perennial built around a crown, shallow roots, leaves, flowers, and runners.

The crown is a compressed stem at the center of the plant. Leaves, flower clusters, branch crowns, and runners emerge from it. Most roots occupy the upper part of the soil, which is why strawberries can suffer quickly from both drought and waterlogged conditions.

- Crown: the central growing point. Bury it and it can rot. Leave the roots exposed and the plant can dry out.
- Roots: shallow and easily stressed by inconsistent moisture, deep cultivation, compaction, or saturated soil.
- Runners: horizontal stems that produce daughter plants. They are useful in a June-bearing matted row and usually unwanted in a fruit-focused day-neutral system.
- Branch crowns: additional crowns that form on the mother plant and can increase fruiting potential.
- Flowers: each blossom carries many stigmas; complete pollination is part of producing a well-shaped berry.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

FIND THE CROWN

Before planting a bare-root strawberry, hold it in your hand and identify the crown, roots, and growing point. If you cannot point to the crown, do not put soil around it yet.

02 Choose the strawberry type before the cultivar.

June-bearing, everbearing, and day-neutral plants are not the same production system with different labels.

TYPE	FRUITING PATTERN	RUNNERS	BEST FIT
June-bearing	One concentrated crop in late spring / early summer	Many runners	Matted row; preservation; a lot of fruit at once
Everbearing	Usually early and late crops with a gap	Few runners	Home gardens where a second flush matters
Day-neutral	Repeats through the season when temperatures are moderate	Few runners	Containers, hill systems, long harvest season

Retail labels are messy. Day-neutral cultivars are often sold under the word “everbearing,” so learn the actual cultivar name and look it up before buying.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

CHOOSE YOUR HARVEST PERSONALITY

If you want jam, freezing, or a big harvest window, June-bearing may make sense. If you want handfuls for breakfast over a longer season, day-neutral plants are often easier to live with.

03 The best variety is local.

Strawberry cultivars can perform very differently under different winters, summers, soils, and disease pressure.

Instead of chasing the cultivar with the prettiest catalog photo, start with recommendations from your local Extension service, regional berry growers, and reputable nurseries that actually know the climate you are growing in.

- Match the cultivar to your production type first: June-bearing, everbearing, or day-neutral.
- Compare disease resistance or tolerance, especially if gray mold, root disease, leaf disease, or other problems are common in your climate.
- Look at harvest timing. Early bloom can mean more frost exposure; late harvest can mean more summer heat or insect pressure.
- Flavor, firmness, berry size, storage life, and yield are different traits. The “best” strawberry depends on whether you eat fresh, preserve, sell, or freeze.
- Buy certified, disease-free plants from a reputable source. Starting a new patch with questionable runners can import viruses and other problems.

ONE CULTIVAR CAN MAKE FRUIT

Most strawberries are self-fruitful. You generally do not need a second cultivar for cross-pollination, although insect pollination still improves fruit development.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

TRIAL BEFORE YOU MARRY THE PATCH

If you have space, plant more than one locally recommended cultivar the first time. Taste and vigor in your actual garden are more useful than somebody else’s ranking.

04 Give strawberries sun, drainage, and clean history.

A patch can look simple above ground and still inherit years of trouble from the soil underneath it.

Strawberries prefer a sunny site with good internal drainage and reliable access to irrigation. Avoid low places that collect cold air during bloom and sites where water sits after rain.

- Use full sun when possible for better flowering, ripening, airflow, and fruit quality.
- Avoid chronic wet spots. Raised beds can improve drainage where the native soil stays heavy or saturated.
- Check the crop history. Extension guidance often recommends avoiding sites recently planted to Verticillium-susceptible crops such as tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, or raspberries.
- Deal with perennial weeds before planting. Strawberries are shallow-rooted and do not enjoy competing with established weeds.
- Keep the patch where you can reach it. Harvesting, runner control, netting, renovation, and winter mulch all require access.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

WALK THE SITE AFTER RAIN

If water is standing where you planned the strawberry bed, change the site or raise the root zone. More fertilizer will not compensate for roots sitting without oxygen.

05 Prepare the soil before the runners own it.

The easiest time to correct pH, drainage, and major weed problems is before a perennial bed is full of crowns.

Strawberries generally perform well in slightly acidic soil, with many Extension recommendations centered around roughly pH 5.5 to 6.5 depending on region and production system. A soil test should make the final call.

- Test the soil before planting and amend to the crop recommendation, not to a generic “garden fertility” recipe.
- Build organic matter across the bed rather than creating rich little planting pockets around each crown.
- Avoid excessive nitrogen. Too much can create lush leaves, softer growth, more disease pressure, and disappointing fruit.
- Do not cultivate deeply after the patch is established; much of the strawberry root system lives close to the surface.
- If you are planting in containers, use a well-drained potting mix rather than digging ordinary garden soil into a pot.

WATER USUALLY MATTERS MORE THAN FERTILIZER

Strawberry yield is often limited by poor drainage or inconsistent water before it is limited by a lack of another bagged input.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

DO THE BORING WORK FIRST

Test pH, remove perennial weeds, fix drainage, and decide how you will irrigate before plants arrive. Strawberries multiply fast enough without multiplying your problems too.

06 Bare roots, plugs, and potted plants all need a healthy start.

The format changes. The goal does not: vigorous, disease-free plants whose roots never dry out.

Bare-root crowns are common and economical, especially for larger plantings. Plugs and potted plants cost more but arrive with an established root ball. Whatever you buy, plant promptly and keep roots protected from sun and drying wind.

- Buy from a reputable nursery that sells named cultivars and clean planting stock.
- Keep dormant bare-root plants cool until planting and do not leave the roots exposed while you work through the row.
- Rehydrate bare roots briefly before planting if the nursery or Extension guidance recommends it; do not leave crowns soaking for long periods.
- Set potted or plug plants at the same crown height they were growing at in the container.
- Replace plants that fail to establish early rather than accepting permanent holes in a new bed.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

STAGE BEFORE PLANTING

Lay out the spacing, irrigation, tools, and mulch first. Then bring the roots out. Bare roots should not spend an afternoon tanning while you decide where the row goes.

07 Crown depth is the five-second decision that can ruin the plant.

Too deep can rot the crown. Too shallow can expose and dry the roots.

For bare-root strawberries, spread the roots downward into a hole deep enough that they are not folded upward. The midpoint of the crown should sit at the soil surface, with roots covered and the growing point exposed.

- Do not bend long roots into a J-shape because the hole is too shallow; deepen the hole instead.
- Firm the soil around roots so there are no large air pockets, then water thoroughly to settle the bed.
- Recheck crown height after watering. Soil can settle and turn a correctly planted crown into a buried one.
- Do not pile mulch over the growing point. Keep the crown breathing.
- In a container, leave enough room for watering and future crown growth without burying the plant.

THINK COLLAR, NOT BURIAL

The crown belongs at the transition between roots and air. It should not be wearing a dirt turtleneck.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

CHECK EVERY PLANT

When you finish the row, walk back and look only at crown height. Fix the high and low ones before the roots decide your mistake is permanent.

08 Choose a system, not just a spacing.

How you manage runners determines what the strawberry bed becomes.

SYSTEM	COMMON FIT	HOW IT WORKS	TRADEOFF
Matted row	June-bearing	Mother plants make rooted daughters that fill a controlled strip	More plants; concentrated harvest; renovation required
Hill system	Day-neutral or runner-controlled June-bearing	Plants stay as individuals; runners removed	Cleaner structure; easier picking; more runner work
Containers	Day-neutral especially	Individual plants in well-drained mix; runners usually removed	Small spaces; close water monitoring
Raised bed	Any type	Can support matted row or hill management	Better drainage and access; can dry faster

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

PICK BEFORE PLANTING

Do not space June-bearers like a matted row and then panic when runners fill the gaps. Do not plant day-neutrals tightly and then let every runner root. The system decides which growth is useful.

09 The first season is about building the machine.

A new strawberry plant can make flowers before it has enough roots and leaf area to support the crop you actually want.

Establishment practices vary by production system and region, but the principle is consistent: early fruit can compete with root and crown growth. Many Extension programs recommend removing first-season flowers from June-bearers and removing flowers from day-neutrals for roughly the first four to six weeks after planting.

- June-bearing: in many cold-climate perennial systems, remove first-year blossoms so the plants invest in roots, leaves, crowns, and runners for next year.
- Day-neutral: remove early flower clusters during establishment, then allow the plants to fruit once they are actively growing and well rooted.
- Keep water consistent during establishment; drought at this stage can shrink the entire future system.
- Control weeds early. A tiny new strawberry plant is not a competitive groundcover yet.
- Replace dead or weak plants quickly while the rest of the bed is still young.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

SACRIFICE THE FIRST HANDFUL

Picking off flowers feels wrong because you bought strawberries to get strawberries. Sometimes the fastest way to a productive patch is refusing the first few berries.

10 Water consistently because the roots live near the surface.

Strawberries can go from fine to stressed quickly when the top of the root zone dries out.

Most strawberry roots occupy the top several inches of soil. That makes irrigation one of the most important parts of fruit size, establishment, runner rooting, and post-harvest recovery.

- Use drip or soaker irrigation when practical to wet the root zone without keeping flowers and fruit unnecessarily wet.
- Water deeply enough to reach the root zone, then check the soil instead of watering by the clock alone.
- Containers need more frequent checks because a small root volume can dry rapidly in sun and wind.
- Do not let renovation season become drought season; June-bearing plants are building next year's potential after harvest.
- Fix leaking or poorly distributed irrigation early. A strawberry bed often shows uneven water as uneven plant size and uneven berries.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

USE YOUR FINGER, NOT YOUR ANXIETY

Check moisture below the surface near the crowns. The goal is evenly moist root-zone soil, not permanently wet leaves and not a daily ceremonial sprinkling.

11 Mulch does several jobs at once.

It keeps fruit cleaner, reduces weeds, buffers moisture, and can become winter protection in colder climates.

Clean straw is the classic strawberry mulch for a reason. It can separate berries from soil splash, moderate moisture, suppress weeds, and later provide cold protection. Other systems use plastic, landscape fabric, or container media depending on the production type.

- Keep mulch loose enough that the crowns are not buried or smothered.
- Use clean material that is not full of weed seed.
- Keep weeds from establishing inside the crown area where removal becomes difficult without damaging shallow roots.
- If cultivating bare soil, stay shallow. Deep hoeing can prune the strawberry roots you are trying to feed.
- Plastic mulches can be useful in hill or day-neutral systems, but they change irrigation and nutrient delivery because the soil surface is covered.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

MAKE FRUIT TOUCH MULCH, NOT MUD

If ripe berries are sitting on bare wet soil, solve that before the wettest part of harvest. Clean fruit rots less, stays cleaner, and is nicer to eat straight from the patch.

12 Runners are either free plants or stolen energy.

The same runner is useful in one system and a problem in another.

A runner, or stolon, produces daughter plants that can root and become independent crowns. June-bearing matted rows use runners to build the productive strip. Day-neutral hill systems remove them so the mother plant directs more energy to fruit and crown development.

- Matted row: guide early runners into the row and let selected daughter plants root where you want them.
- Keep the row narrow enough for light, airflow, picking, and renovation. More plants eventually means smaller berries, not infinite yield.
- Hill/day-neutral systems: remove runners regularly rather than letting daughter plants drain the mother plant.
- To propagate a healthy plant, pin a selected daughter crown onto moist soil or potting mix until it roots, then sever the runner.
- Do not use a diseased or virus-suspect old patch as a free nursery for the next bed. Start new plantings with clean stock when vigor declines.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

GIVE EVERY RUNNER A JOB

When you see a runner, decide: root here, root in a pot, or remove. “I’ll deal with it later” is how six strawberries become sixty in the walkway.

13 The flower is more fragile than the plant.

A strawberry crown can survive weather that destroys an open blossom in one cold night.

Most strawberry cultivars are self-fruitful, but good pollination still matters because each berry develops from a flower with many stigmas. Incomplete pollination can contribute to small or misshapen fruit.

- Protect pollinators by avoiding unnecessary insecticide applications during bloom and by following all label restrictions when treatment is actually needed.
- Cold, rain, or wind during flowering can reduce pollinator activity even when the plant itself looks healthy.
- Open flowers are more cold-sensitive than dormant crowns. Monitor frost forecasts during bloom.
- Floating row covers can add a few degrees of protection when installed correctly, but they may need to be opened or managed for pollinator access during bloom.
- If flowers survive but berries are misshapen, think about pollination, frost, tarnished plant bug, and other flower-stage problems before blaming fertilizer.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

WATCH THE FLOWERS, NOT JUST THE FORECAST

When strawberries are blooming, a cold night matters more than it did two weeks earlier. Production follows the most vulnerable tissue, not the toughest part of the plant.

14 Pick ripe fruit often.

Strawberries do not improve after you ignore them for three extra days.

Harvest frequency affects flavor, rot, insect pressure, and the amount of fruit you actually get to eat. Day-neutral plantings in particular may need picking every one to three days during active production.

- Pick berries when they are fully colored for best fresh-eating flavor, unless local disease or market conditions require a slightly firmer stage.
- Harvest in the cooler part of the day when possible and handle fruit gently; strawberries bruise easily.
- Remove overripe, damaged, and rotting fruit instead of leaving it in the patch as a disease and insect resource.
- Refrigerate harvested berries promptly if they are not being eaten or processed right away.
- Do not wash berries until shortly before use if storage life matters; extra surface moisture can speed deterioration.

THE BEST STRAWBERRY STORAGE CONTAINER IS YOUR MOUTH

But for the ones that survive the walk back to the house, cool them quickly and keep them dry.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

HARVEST WITH A CULL CUP

Carry a second small container for damaged or rotten berries. Sanitation gets much easier when you remove problems while you are already picking.

15 June-bearing strawberries need renovation after harvest.

The crop is finished. The work that builds next year is just beginning.

Renovation is a deliberate reset of an established June-bearing bed. It thins crowding, removes old foliage, narrows the row, manages weeds, and encourages vigorous new growth while plants form the crowns and buds that support the next crop.

- Begin soon after the final harvest rather than waiting until late summer.
- Mow or clip old leaves above the crowns; do not scalp or injure the crown itself.
- Remove cut foliage, especially when disease has been present.
- Narrow the matted row and thin excess plants so light and air can reach the remaining crowns.
- Apply nutrients according to soil-test and local recommendations, then irrigate so the bed can regrow strongly.
- Guide useful early runners into the row; remove plants and runners that fill aisles or make the stand too dense.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

RENOVATE WHILE YOU STILL REMEMBER THE HARVEST

Mark the weak, weedy, diseased, or low-producing sections during picking. After harvest, you will know exactly which parts deserve another year and which parts should become compost.

16 Day-neutral strawberries are managed for fruit, not for a mat.

Long-season production works best when individual plants keep their space and their runners keep disappearing.

Day-neutral cultivars can flower and fruit repeatedly when temperatures are moderate. They are often managed as annuals or short-lived plantings because first-year production can be strong and older plantings may decline in berry size, vigor, or disease cleanliness.

- Remove runners throughout the season so energy stays with the fruiting plant.
- Remove flowers during the first several weeks after planting to establish roots and leaf area, then allow harvest to begin.
- Keep moisture and fertility steady through the long fruiting season instead of treating the crop like a short June flush.
- Extreme heat can temporarily reduce flowering and fruiting. Mulch, irrigation, and protected-culture systems can moderate stress.
- Do not renovate day-neutral plants the way you renovate a June-bearing matted row. The production system is different.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

SCHEDULE RUNNER PATROL

For a day-neutral planting, runner removal is not a once-a-season chore. Put it on the same mental calendar as harvesting and irrigation checks.

17 Strawberries are excellent container fruit.

Day-neutral plants are especially useful when the goal is a compact patch with a long harvest window.

Containers solve several problems at once: poor native soil, limited space, difficult pH, and the need to keep fruit close to the kitchen. They also create one new problem - a small root zone dries out much faster than a garden bed.

- Use a container with generous drainage and enough soil volume that the root zone does not overheat and dry out immediately.
- Use potting mix rather than dense garden soil.
- Keep crowns at the proper height and leave room to add a little mix later if the crown lengthens over multiple seasons.
- Remove runners that cannot root into useful soil; dangling daughter plants still draw resources from the mother.
- Water and feed based on plant response and container conditions. Container strawberries can need more frequent attention than in-ground plants.
- Plan winter protection according to your climate; roots in exposed pots are less insulated than roots in the ground.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

CHOOSE VOLUME OVER NOVELTY

A roomy ordinary pot usually gives roots a better life than a tiny decorative strawberry tower with twelve pockets that all dry at different speeds.

18 Winter protection starts after the plant has hardened off.

Mulch is insulation. Applied too early, it can interfere with cold acclimation; too late, crowns may already be injured.

In cold-winter climates, straw mulch helps protect crowns from cold, wind desiccation, and damaging freeze-thaw cycles. Timing should follow local conditions rather than a fixed calendar date.

- Wait until plants have gone dormant and the soil has cooled according to local Extension guidance before applying winter mulch.
- Use clean straw or another locally recommended material and spread it evenly enough to protect crowns without creating a soggy mat.
- Wind can move mulch. Recheck exposed parts of the bed during winter.
- In spring, remove or rake back mulch as growth resumes rather than leaving plants buried in darkness and moisture.
- Keep some straw in aisles and around fruit later to reduce soil splash and muddy berries.
- Raised beds and containers can be more exposed to winter temperature swings and may need additional protection.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

LET THE WEATHER DECIDE

Do not winter-mulch because the calendar says “November.” Watch dormancy, soil temperature, hard freezes, and local guidance. The plant needs to acclimate before you tuck it in.

19 Most strawberry pest management starts with observation.

The goal is not a sterile patch. The goal is enough fruit and healthy plants without making every insect a chemical emergency.

Common problems vary by region and production system. Learn the important local pests, then check plants regularly so you can respond to the actual organism instead of spraying a symptom.

- Tarnished plant bug can injure flowers and developing fruit, contributing to misshapen berries.
- Spider mites can build during hot, dry conditions; inspect the undersides of leaves for stippling, mites, and webbing.
- Slugs and snails often exploit dense, damp, mulched areas and damaged fruit close to the soil.
- Spotted-wing drosophila pressure is usually greater on later-ripening soft fruit; frequent harvest and removal of overripe fruit help reduce breeding resources.
- Birds, deer, rodents, and other wildlife may discover ripe strawberries before you do. Physical exclusion is often more reliable than repellents.
- Use pesticides only when identification, timing, threshold, label, and crop registration all make sense. Protect pollinators during bloom.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

BRING A HAND LENS

Before treating “little dots” or “weird leaves,” look closer. One minute of identification can prevent weeks of treating the wrong problem.

20 Keep fruit dry, air moving, and the patch clean.

Many strawberry disease problems get easier when the canopy is less crowded and wet fruit does not stay wet.

Gray mold, leaf diseases, anthracnose, root rots, and wilt problems vary by climate and cultivar. Cultural management cannot prevent every disease, but it can reduce the conditions many pathogens exploit.

- Start with disease-free planting stock and cultivars suited to local disease pressure.
- Use good drainage and avoid sites with a known history of soilborne strawberry problems.
- Prefer drip irrigation when practical and water early enough that accidental leaf wetness can dry.
- Keep weeds and crowding under control so air can move through the canopy.
- Remove rotten fruit and severely diseased debris instead of leaving inoculum in the patch.
- Renovate June-bearing beds promptly after harvest and replace plantings that are chronically diseased rather than trying to keep them forever.

GRAY MOLD LOVES A WET CROWDED BERRY PATCH

Clean fruit, airflow, dry surfaces, sanitation, and harvest frequency are management tools before a fungicide ever enters the conversation.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

PHOTOGRAPH BEFORE YOU REMOVE

When disease appears, take clear photos of the whole plant, leaves, crown, and fruit before cleanup. Good records make Extension or diagnostic help much more useful.

21 Know when the patch is finished.

A strawberry bed is perennial. It is not immortal.

Over time, crowns age, rows become crowded, berry size falls, weeds build, and disease or virus problems accumulate. A well-managed June-bearing bed may produce for several years, but eventually replacement is better than another heroic rescue attempt.

- Track berry size, total harvest, plant vigor, weed pressure, and disease instead of keeping a bed simply because it still contains strawberry plants.
- Start the replacement bed before the old bed collapses so you do not lose an entire harvest season.
- Use clean nursery stock for the new planting rather than automatically moving runners from a declining old patch.
- Rotate to a different site when possible, especially if soilborne disease has been part of the problem.
- Use the old bed as a lesson: note which cultivar, spacing, irrigation, mulch, and management choices you would repeat or change.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

RETIRE THE BED BEFORE IT RETIRES YOU

If you spend more time fighting weeds, disease, and tiny berries than harvesting fruit, the patch has answered the question. Start fresh.

22 The strawberry year.

Exact dates shift with climate. The sequence is what matters.

SEASON	WHAT THE PATCH NEEDS
LATE WINTER / EARLY SPRING	Inspect winter injury; pull back mulch as growth resumes; prepare irrigation; plant new crowns when soil is workable.
SPRING	Weed, monitor frost, manage early flowers according to establishment system, watch bloom and pollinators.
HARVEST	Pick frequently, remove rotten fruit, keep soil moisture steady, protect ripe fruit from wildlife.
POST-HARVEST JUNE-BEARERS	Renovate promptly: mow above crowns, narrow rows, thin, weed, feed by recommendation, irrigate, manage runners.
SUMMER / FALL	Day-neutrals keep fruiting; remove runners; maintain water; monitor mites, SWD, weeds, and disease. June-bearers build next year's buds.
LATE FALL / WINTER	Allow cold acclimation, then apply winter protection where needed; check wind exposure and crown coverage.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

PUT RENOVATION ON THE CALENDAR NOW

If you grow June-bearers, add a reminder for immediately after expected harvest. Renovation delayed until “sometime later” is usually renovation that never happens.

23 Strawberry patch checklist.

If these answers are clear, the plants have a much better chance of becoming a productive system.

- I know whether I am growing June-bearing, everbearing, or day-neutral cultivars.
- The cultivar is recommended for my regional conditions or I am deliberately trialing it.
- The site gets enough sun and drains well after heavy rain.
- I checked the bed history for important soilborne disease risks.
- The soil pH and fertility were tested before planting.
- I know exactly where the crown should sit at planting depth.
- The bed spacing matches a matted row, hill system, raised bed, or container plan.
- I have a reliable irrigation plan for shallow roots.
- I know whether runners will be rooted, redirected, potted, or removed.
- I know whether first-season flowers should be removed in my system.
- I have a harvest sanitation plan and wildlife protection if needed.
- If I grow June-bearers, I understand post-harvest renovation.
- If winters are cold, I have a local winter-mulch plan.
- I am willing to replace the patch when production and health decline.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

THEN PLANT

Strawberries are forgiving when the system is clear. Give the crown the right depth, the roots steady moisture, the runners a job, and the patch enough room to breathe.

24 Sources worth keeping.

Use regional Extension guidance for cultivar selection, frost timing, winter protection, nutrient rates, and locally important pests.

Penn State Extension - Growing Strawberries

Updated home-garden guidance on plant biology, variety selection, planting, establishment, nutrition, renovation, and production systems.

extension.psu.edu/growing-strawberries

Penn State Extension - Strawberry Establishment

Current planting-depth and establishment guidance for bare-root and plasticulture systems.

extension.psu.edu/strawberry-establishment-planting-and-other-basics

University of Minnesota Extension - Strawberry Farming

Detailed resources on June-bearing and day-neutral systems, runners, irrigation, frost, pests, diseases, and renovation.

extension.umn.edu/agriculture/specialty-crops/commercial-fruit-production/strawberry-farming

Oregon State University Extension - Growing Strawberries in Your Home Garden

Detailed guide to types, containers, matted rows, hill systems, planting depth, runners, renovation, and home-garden management.

extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/ec-1307-growing-strawberries-your-home-garden

Cornell Cooperative Extension - Berry Resources

Cold-climate guidance on winter mulch, spring removal, gray mold management, and berry production.

blogs.cornell.edu/berries/

University of Maine Cooperative Extension - Strawberry IPM

Integrated pest and disease monitoring resources for strawberry production.

extension.umaine.edu/ipm/stawberry-ipm/

IMPORTANT

This guide is educational. Cultivar performance, winter protection, fertility, pesticide labels, and pest pressure vary by region and change over time. Use current local Extension guidance for crop-specific decisions.

BUILD THE PATCH, NOT JUST THE HARVEST.

THE WHOLE GUIDE IN TEN LINES:

- Choose June-bearing or day-neutral based on the harvest and management system you actually want.
- Buy clean, regionally appropriate plants.
- Give strawberries sun, drainage, and steady water.
- Plant the crown at soil level and spread the roots downward.
- Remove first-season flowers when your production system calls for establishment before fruit.
- Use runners deliberately: root them in matted rows or remove them in fruit-focused hill systems.
- Keep weeds, wet fruit, and crowding under control.
- Harvest often and remove damaged fruit.
- Renovate June-bearing beds immediately after harvest.
- Replace a tired patch before nostalgia becomes a management plan.

A strawberry plant is small. A strawberry system is not. Give the roots what they need, give the runners a job, and the patch will do what strawberries are very good at doing: turning a few plants into far more plants and, eventually, a ridiculous amount of fruit.

BE KIND. GROW YOUR OWN FOOD.