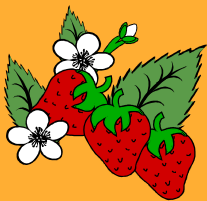




*St. James 4-Hers began selling strawberry plants as a fundraiser in 1994. The abundance and quality of your strawberry crop is related to your management decisions. Site selection, soil pH and fertility, spacing, transplanting, and disease control are factors that affect strawberry productivity.*



*Strawberry Hints  
made available  
by:  
Al Orgeron  
Assoc. County  
Agent  
St. James Parish*

# Improving your chances: Home Grown Strawberries

## Site Selection

Strawberry plants thrive in well drained sandy soils. Strawberry plants are shallow rooted and do not like wet feet (roots in water); hence planting on raised beds 18''-24'' tall to help with water drainage.



Choose an area that gets a minimum of 8 – 10 hours of sunlight. Plant your berries in a new area where you did not grow strawberries the prior year. The use of crop rotation will help with disease management; bacteria and fungi populations build up over time in areas where the same crop is planted year after year.

## Soil pH and Fertility

Soil pH affects the availability of soil nutrients by changing the composition of the nutrient, thus changing the ability of the nutrient to enter the plant. The target pH for strawberries is 5.2-6.0, this is moderately acidic. The addition of fertilizer to strawberries production is a must. Prior to transplant, in September or October, apply 8 pounds of 13-13-13 or 8-24-24 as a starter fertilizer. Wait until you get 1 to 2 inches of rain before transplanting. Calcium and magnesium are critical nutrients essential to quality strawberry production. Soil levels of calcium should be in the range of 700 to 1200 parts per million. Low calcium levels can enhance the occurrence of anthracnose fruit rot on berries. In January and again in February apply 1 teaspoon of 13-13-13 or 6-12-6 between each plant.



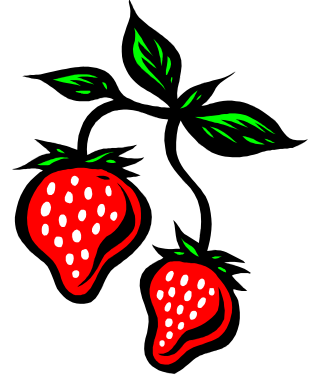
## Spacing

*Good air circulation is critical for good plant health. Proper air circulation reduces many diseases which are enhanced by high moisture levels.*

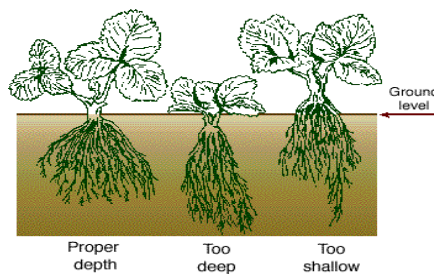
*Strawberry plants should be spaced 10 to 13 inches apart on single-planted rows or 13 to 16 inches apart and offset on double-planted rows. The row spacing for most commercial strawberry is 42 to 48 inches which allows for tractors and equipment to apply pesticides.*

## Transplanting

Before transplanting, Dr. Jimmy Boudreaux, Vegetable Specialist for the LSU AgCenter suggest bare-root strawberry plants to be dipped into the fungicide **Captan**. Add 2 tablespoons of Captan per gallon of water. Prior to dipping, the plants should be washed free of any adhering soil. **The entire plant should be dipped for 20 to 30 minutes prior to planting.** Plants should be set in field as soon as possible.



Placement of transplants in the seedbed is critical to plant success. The bud and crown of the plant should be above ground and the roots below ground level. Plants set too high will suffer from root injury from exposure. Those set too low will usually suffer from bud or crown injury. Plants set with their roots bent will lack vigor and have poor yields. Firm the soil around the roots to prevent drying out. After the plot has been planted, water the plants to settle the soil around the roots. Strawberries require a lot of water after transplanting. It is not uncommon for growers to water 4 to 5 hours for 5 to 10 days after transplanting.



## Disease control

Strawberries are susceptible to many diseases. Leaf spot, angular spot, gray mold, and fruit anthracnose are very common in Louisiana. Homeowners are limited in their fungicide choices to control these diseases. Once flowering begins, homeowners should use Captan weekly to help control these diseases.