

Strawberry

Planting & Growing Guide

Questions? Contact us at (888) 784-1722 or helpdesk@groworganic.com

Heeling In: When your bare root plants arrive, open the plastic bags immediately. It is best to plant right away, within a week of delivery, however if you cannot plant right away, you may “heel in” the plants to protect them and keep them alive (but still dormant) until you are able to plant them in their permanent spot.

Outdoors: To heel in bare root plants outside, pick a location that is shielded from wind. Dig a trench about twice as deep as the roots are long. Place in the hole roots side down and cover the roots with soil or sand and gently tamp down to avoid air pockets. Periodically check the root area, keeping the soil moist.

Indoors: To heel in bare root strawberries indoors, whether due to snow or a frozen ground, choose a cool place like a root cellar, basement, or garage. It’s important to choose a place where the temperature stays between 38°F and 45°F. This is important so the roots neither freeze, nor does the plant break dormancy. Place the roots in a container with soil or sand and be sure to keep the root area moist.

Soil Preparation: Strawberries require a loose, loamy, slightly acidic soil (pH 6.0–6.5) and full sun to achieve peak berry quality, but they will tolerate a variety of soil conditions as long as they have adequate drainage. Prepare your strawberry beds by turning under high quality animal manure or plant residue-based compost. Compost composed of cedar or redwood is not an acceptable substitute for high quality compost.

Planting & Growing: When you are ready to plant, put the transplants in a bucket of water for a few minutes to rehydrate them and to keep them from drying out in the wind and sun. Dig each hole deep enough so that the transplant roots will not be bent or “j-rooted” when covered with soil. Next, prepare a soil cone at the bottom of the hole for the roots to rest upon when buried, keeping the roots as straight as possible. Finally, fill the hole with loose soil, keeping the upper crown bud at or slightly above the soil line, as plants will die if the crowns are completely covered. Once planted, strawberries will spread by producing “runners” where leaf cluster tips touch the ground. Consider planting into weed fabric, especially the Everbearer or Day Neutral varieties. Give all strawberry varieties 1” of water per week, preferably using drip-type irrigation to minimize berry spoilage and keep the beds thoroughly weeded!

After the first frost, mulch beds with straw or agricultural fabrics (ie “Floating Row Cover” or Frost Blankets). Where snow remains on the ground throughout the winter, no mulching is required. When the ground warms in spring, remove any organic mulches, but leave agricultural fabrics on until the first flowers appear; fabrics will speed growth but prevent pollination if left on during blossoming. Strawberries are prone to diseases caused by overly moist soil conditions and overcrowding. Soil must be kept loose and well drained, plants must be properly spaced and ripe or moldy fruit picked daily. Snails and slugs can be a significant problem, but are controlled using traps and copper strip-barriers. Protect against birds with netting, scare balloons and flash tape.

Important Information

- **If your plants arrived damaged**, take photographs and contact us immediately and we will provide you with a refund of the purchase price, or a replacement.
- **You should plant your strawberries within a week of delivery.** If you are unable to do so, you can plant it in a pot or “heel in” your strawberries until you are able to plant.
- **In the rare event that your strawberries do not leaf out by May 15th**, we offer a Limited Guarantee on dormant plants. See the last page for details.

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June Bearers generally produce a single large crop in spring to early summer, as early as March in warmer regions such as Southern California and Florida. They are prolific producers for 3 to 4 weeks, and are a good choice for growers who want to limit their growing season for marketing or home processing reasons.

Since June Bearers spread their runners very rapidly, many growers consider the “matted row method” to be the most effective means of propagation. Rows are spaced 3’ - 4’ apart with berry plants spaced at 18” - 24” apart. Plants are then allowed to “runner” freely in all directions, creating larger rows centered on the original mother plants, all flowers should be removed the first year of growth to allow for maximum runner spread. Fruit production will occur the second year from the runners. A post-harvest regime of mowing plants down to 2” and tilling to within 10” of the original row will extend bed life for up to 3 years. Tilling up the original row, and leaving second or third generation plants to form new rows can extend bed life even longer.

Everbearers are most productive in northern areas where summer brings extended daylight hours. These varieties are not as prolific as June Bearers but are especially suitable for growers who wish

to harvest an intermittent supply of berries in the summer. Also, you will get fruit the first year after planting, unlike June Bearers. Many growers prefer to use the "Hill System," for Ever Bearers, which produce few runners. Space plants 12" - 15" apart in double or triple wide rows with 1.5' - 2' between rows. Remove the first set of flowers after planting, and pull up all runners throughout spring and summer to increase fruit production. Keeping these varieties trimmed of old, decaying foliage will allow better air circulation across the bed and result in high berry quality. Allow runners to develop in the second season to establish a new generation of plants; production of the original mother plants will decrease after the second season. After the second year's harvest, pull out the mother plants, leaving only new plants spaced on the original bedding plan.

Day Neutral strawberries bear fruit from late winter until early Fall in temperate areas, and from early summer until the first frost in cold climates. These varieties are very prolific but are also more temperamental about their growing conditions than the other varieties; they fare poorly against heat, dry soil and competition from weeds. Since Day Neutral varieties send out few runners, they should be cared for the same way as Ever Bearers (ie. the "Hill System").

Harvesting: It is important to practice proper "picking hygiene" when harvesting berries as disease can be easily spread if good fruit is handled after bad fruit. Always wash hands after removing moldy, deformed or over-ripe fruit and before harvesting your good berries. Pick ripe strawberries by pinching through the stem above the fruit. Never pull on the berry itself. All strawberries will last several days under refrigeration.

Perishable Items (3-Day Return Policy):

We guarantee the perishable items we sell to be in good, viable condition when we sell them. Perishable items include, but are not limited to, garlic bulbs, flower bulbs, seed potatoes, onion sets & transplants, bare-root trees, vegetable crowns... etc. If your perishable item arrives in substandard condition, please contact us within 3 days of the purchase date (or delivery date) and we will provide you with a refund of the purchase price (including shipping costs), or a replacement. Accordingly, we urge you to open any boxes marked as "Perishable" immediately upon receiving them. Because some perishable items can deteriorate very quickly, we cannot accept any claims beyond the 3-day time frame as it becomes too difficult to determine if these items were delivered in substandard condition, or if they turned into such substandard condition because of having been improperly cared for or stored once delivered.

Limitation of Remedy

We warrant to the extent of the purchase price only that the seeds or plants sold hereunder are as described on the label within recognized tolerances. No other warranty is given, expressed or implied, of (1) the merchantability or fitness of the seeds or plants for any particular purpose, or (2) against loss due to any cause. We cannot accept any responsibility for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions (soil preparation, fertilization, weed and pest control, temperature control, irrigation...etc.) that must be met to insure the success of your crop(s) or plants.

Limited Dormant Tree & Plant Guarantee (When Planted in the Ground by April 1st)

Claim Deadline is June 1st (with the exception of persimmon trees, which have a deadline of June 15th). Claims placed after June 1st (or June 15th for persimmon trees) will be denied.

Please note: Our trees will come to you topped off at approximately 3 ft. in height to put the tree's stored energy into root development vs. foliage production.

What We Guarantee

Our only guarantee is that your dormant tree/plant will arrive in good, viable condition and will leaf out by May 15th (historically 98% of our trees do). This guarantee is only available to customers who purchased their tree/plant directly from us, and who planted their tree/plant in the ground by April 1st (or temporarily in a pot if the ground in their zone was still frozen solid).

What We Cannot Guarantee

We cannot guarantee that your tree/plant remains alive & healthy, or bears fruit, as there are too many variables beyond our control in order to do so (i.e. soil preparation, planting, fertilization, weed & pest control, adequate irrigation and/or drainage, chill hours, compatible hardness for your zone, proper choice of pollinator, etc).

How to Request a Credit

If your tree/plant does not leaf out by May 15th, please perform a scratch test by checking for green under the bark, a few inches over the graft. If the scratch test reveals a brown cambium, that means your tree/plant is dead or dying. Watch our video titled Bare Root (Dormant) Warranty on how to perform this simple test. If the scratch test revealed that your plant is dead or dying, pull it from the ground and take pictures of the entire tree/plant, including the roots. Submit your claim & pictures by using the "Return an Item" tool on our Customer Service page (or email us at helpdesk@groworganic.com) no later than June 1st (or June 15th for persimmon trees). We will review your claim and issue you a credit (not a refund) for the purchase price of your tree/plant (excluding shipping).*

(We reserve the right to not issue credit for items already replaced. We also reserve the right to require photographic evidence that the tree/plant was not killed by root rot, rodent or mechanical damage.*

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