

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA . COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE & HUMAN RESOURCES  
United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating  
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

Horticulture--Oahu County Leaflet No. 19

July, 1981

STRAWBERRIES FOR THE HOME GARDEN

Strawberries are fun to grow in the home garden. Strawberries will grow almost anywhere--in the garden, in containers and even in hanging baskets. Twenty to twenty-five plants should produce over 30 quarts of fruits during the fruiting season.

Cultivars

Cultivars adapted for warm temperatures include 'Pocahantas,' 'Tioga,' 'Albritton,' 'Sequoia,' and 'Headliner.' Everbearing types such as 'Ozark Beauty' as well as other cultivars may be experimented by the home gardener.

Soil and Fertilizer Management

Strawberries should be grown in sandy to loamy soil with good organic matter content. Good drainage is essential for growing strawberries. The soil pH should be between 5.5 to 6.5 but will tolerate a wider range of pH if there is adequate organic matter present. Organic matter or well cured animal manure should be added at the rate of 25 to 40 pounds per 100 square feet along with 1 to 2 pounds per 100 square feet of treble superphosphate or 10-20-20 type of fertilizer. Till the soil 6 to 8 inches in depth.

Apply a fertilizer such as 10-20-20 about a month after planting. As the plants become established, apply a fertilizer such as 10-20-20 or 10-30-10 as necessary to maintain soil fertility.

Planting and Establishment

Select dormant, virus-free plants from local nurseries. The roots should be kept moist if not planted immediately. The plants should be planted in the late evening hours or on cloudy days. Plant the strawberry plants 12 to 18 inches apart, in 2 to 3 feet rows. Spread the root system and cover the roots until the crown is level with the surface of the soil. Irrigate immediately after planting.

As the plants develop, space the runners 6 to 9 inches apart. Remove all the flower clusters from the newly set plants until the runners develop.

Mulching around the plants will help conserve soil moisture, suppress weed, and prevent soil from splashing on the ripe fruits. Black plastic about 1 to 1.5 millimeters thick can be applied prior to planting or soon after planting. Organic mulches should be applied just before blossoms open.

### Irrigation

Irrigate plants soon after planting to insure good stand of strawberries. Irrigate every 4 to 6 days or more often if necessary. Avoid overwatering, especially when fruits are nearing maturity as this may affect the firmness of the berries.

### Pest Management

Rose beetles often feed on the foliage of the strawberry plants. An insecticide such as diazinon will control this insect. Other common pests causing damage to the plant and the fruit include snails and slugs. These pests can be controlled by applying metaldehyde baits along the perimeter of the plantings. Practicing sanitation by removing overmatured fruits, decomposing leaves, and keeping the area clean will reduce slug and snail population.

Powdery mildew and fruit rots are the two most common diseases to occur on strawberries. These diseases can be controlled by using a fungicide such as benomyl. Fruit rot also can be reduced by mulching and preventing the fruits from contacting the soil.

### Harvesting

Strawberries should be harvested when they are 75 percent red or when fully colored. They do not improve their quality after harvesting. Strawberries should be harvested every other day. Pick the berries with stems attached to prevent puncturing the soft fruit. Harvest and discard overripe berries. Berries are easier to handle when they are cooler than when they are picked in the heat of the day or when they are wet. The fruits should be kept out of the sun and placed under refrigeration immediately.

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NOTE: The mention of trade names is for the convenience of the readers only and does not constitute an endorsement of these products by the United States Department of Agriculture or the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, the Hawaii Cooperative Extension Service, and their employees.