

September 2024

- **Why is my strawberry patch unproductive?**

Strawberry plants can be either June bearing or everbearing (day neutral). The plants need plenty of sun-at the minimum six hours and more is better although not very hot sun as this can cause berries to not turn red. If hot weather is expected put a shade cover over the plants. Plant in good quality slightly acidic well drained soil with well rotted compost added in the spring. Plant half of the total area each year so you have room for developing runners. Good June bearing varieties to grow in our area are Sequoia, Rainier, Hood, Pouget, Reliance and Tillamook. For everbearing varieties choose Tristar, Hecker, Quinault, and Seascape.

Space June bearers 18 inches apart and plant with the crowns slightly above the soil line. Remove flowers from the plants for a few weeks to allow the plants to develop.

Strawberries require pollinating insects like bees for fertilisation. The plants should produce well for about 3 years. Over time the beds become crowded and prone to botrytis (a fungal disease). Take out excess runners and leave a couple from each plant to develop new plants. You can also let these runners grow into containers set down in the beds with the runner still attached. In the fall cut the runners and plant them in the bed. Water the plants well and early in the day but don't let the soil sit waterlogged - it should be well drained. Using straw in the beds as mulch over the soil and between the plants helps the berries from getting botrytis.

Cover the plants with leaves in fall as a mulch. Strawberry root weevils, root feeders, can be controlled by handpicking by putting a ground sheet down at night and tapping the plants firmly. An upside-down umbrella will also work. Place the weevils into soapy water to destroy them. If leaf notches are seen in late May you can control adults with pyrethrin spray. Put out a trap of corrugated cardboard strips wrapped around a stake and put several of these around each plant.

Another trap is to place pots upside down around plants with crumpled up newspaper inside. Check traps in the morning and destroy the insects in soapy water.

Sources:

<https://extension.umn.edu/fruit/growing-strawberries-home-garden>

Backyard Bounty. The Complete Guide to Year-Round Gardening in the Pacific Northwest by Linda Gilkeson New Society Publishers 2011

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/gardens-gardening/your-garden/help-for-the-home-gardener/advice-tips-resources/insects-pests-and-problems/diseases/fungal->

spots/botrytisblight#:~:text=Symptoms%20and%20Diagnosis,following%20a%20cool%20damp%20period.