



Strawberries are one of New Zealand's favourite summer fruits. Although strawberries are frost hardy and can be planted all year round they are best planted through autumn/winter to establish larger fruit with higher yields. A healthy plant is capable of producing fruit for up to 6 months. They require minimal space in the garden or alternatively can be grown successfully in pots and tubs.

Strawberries are one of the quickest of all the berry fruits to produce a crop. The plant is usually only retained for one or two years before it is replaced with a new one. This is because they produce at their best on their first and second year and decline each year thereafter. There is however still hope after you have bought these little gems. Each plant usually sends out runners; these can be cut off the mother plant and replanted to create new plants. By doing this you are guaranteed successful production year after year.

Growing in Pots

Select a suitable planter, one with external holes or gaps for multiple plants is ideal. If unglazed you may need to seal your pot first. Add Oderings Potting Mix or Oderings Fruit & Veggie Mix. Place strawberries into the holes as you fill the planter. To help with watering place a sausage shape of sphagnum moss down the centre of the planter. Keep adding soil up to next set of holes and planting strawberries, until all the gaps have been planted. Fill to the top with soil and plant strawberries on top layer.

When feeding plants in containers use Yates Thrive Strawberry & Berry Fruit liquid plant food every two weeks and Oderings Total Replenish twice a year.



Controlling Birds

There are a few different methods to prevent birds but the most effective is bird netting. It is no good throwing the netting straight over the plants as the cunning feathery friends will still find a way to get to the fruit. Putting netting over a frame is the best way to protect your plants. It does make it a little harder to get the berries but at least you get to eat them.

Maintenance

- Cut off any runners that appear before flowers form.
- Protect with bird netting when strawberries are fruiting.
- Supplement feed with Yates Liquid Potash in early spring to promote healthy fruit. Oderings Garden Replenish or Strawberry Fertiliser should be used once flowering has begun.
- Pick fruit regularly as plants can produce a second burst of fruit towards autumn, especially if one-third of the leaves are removed after the summer crop.
- Water regularly, a drip line is quite effective. Avoid water contact with the berries, which promotes botrytis.
- To enhance flavour and sweetness, reduce watering as the berries start to redden.



Aftercare

- Remove old leaves and stems when fruiting has finished.
- New plants can be grown from runners. Select plants that have fruited well. Peg the runners in a small pot of compost and let roots develop before separating from the parent plant.
- Fertilise plants once fruiting has finished with Oderings Garden Replenish or Strawberry Fertiliser if retaining for the following year.
- Strawberries are perennials, allowing the production of bigger and better fruit. Replace plants every 2–3 years as older plants become more prone to pests and diseases.

To use or not to use... black polythene. The main reason black polythene is used is to keep the plants and the fruit clean. It is also good for keeping a high soil temperature for better fruit production. The disadvantage is that polythene doesn't breathe so the soil deteriorates faster. The alternative to polythene is newspaper, weedmat or mulch such as pea straw; these let the soil breathe and help maintain soil moisture during summer.





Strawberries are hungry feeders



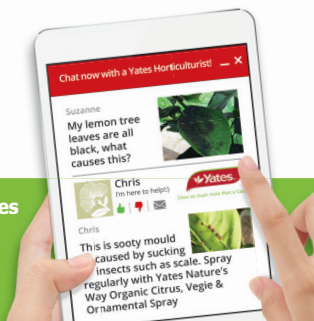
For tastier, more abundant strawberries try **Yates® Thrive® Strawberry & Berry Fruit Liquid Plant Food**. Fast, dual-action formula feeds through roots and leaves.

Yates® Liquid Potash is ideal if strawberry plants have small or poor quality fruit. Delivers high levels of potassium that's needed to produce more flowers and therefore more fruit.



Great things start with Yates™

For more advice on growing strawberries talk to Yates on 0800 693 297, or via Live Chat on yates.co.nz. Send your pics for quick problem solving!



Planting in the Garden

Strawberries need a sunny, warm, well drained position that is humus rich and slightly acidic. Dig in plenty of compost or Oderings Fruit & Veggie Mix at the time of planting to improve drainage and build up the surrounding soil. Incorporate Super Phosphate or General Garden Fertiliser to encourage root growth, then give the bed time to settle before planting.

Plant strawberries in rows of mounds or ridges; this helps with drainage, prevents root disease and keeps the roots warmer, increasing growth and production. Mound up prepared soil; place a strip of polythene or three layers of newspaper over the top leaving enough excess at the sides to secure down. Using a craft knife make a hole in the top, big enough to plant your strawberry. I find it easiest to make a cross (+) shape so the hole isn't too big. Place the plant into the hole making sure your roots aren't crushed (you can trim if needed), so your foliage is sitting on top of the polythene; place rows 20-30cm apart. If using newspaper you can then add mulch over the top, e.g., pea straw, sphagnum moss, etc.

Plant the strawberries at 15cm apart with the crown above ground level. At the start of spring apply Strawberry Fertiliser. This is high in potash and will encourage fruiting; a second application in autumn is also beneficial.

Strawberries



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