



Growing your own strawberries

Strawberries are easy to grow, whether you grow them in the open ground, or in pots and containers. They are attractive too, both in flower and fruit and have great foliage, therefore they make an interesting addition to patio pots and hanging baskets.

To get the best from them there are a few easy-to-follow rules to remember. Apart from that all you need to do is water and feed regularly, and make sure you get there first when that delicious fruit ripens!

It's really important to start with healthy, disease free plants and replace them every few years if they are grown as a permanent crop. You can plant as bare-root young plants in autumn or spring, or better still as cold-stored "runners". These are young plants which are planted in late spring or early summer and they fruit within two months. Bare root plants are available from various nurseries by mail order.



Getting started

If this is your first venture into strawberry growing, and you just want to try a few plants in pots, then buy individually pot-grown plants from the garden centre. These are usually available from late spring and are the popular, reliable varieties with familiar names like 'Elsanta'. It's best to buy at least three plants of any one variety to produce a credible amount of fruits. If buying more than one variety, choose ones with different seasons of maturity to ensure continuity.

Planting your Strawberries

Always plant in an open, sunny position, sheltered from the wind. This means that bees can do their work and fruit develops and ripens. Strawberries need a fertile soil, so prepare the ground well and incorporate a few handfuls of Vitax Q4 fertiliser before planting. If growing

in pots and containers Vitax John Innes No.3 compost will produce the best results. This is a loam based growing medium which holds on to water and nutrients, keeping them available for growing plants.

Strawberries like fertile, alkaline soil and never grow well on acid, peaty soils or shallow, poor soil. Often the soil can be improved by the addition of manure or good garden compost, but if conditions are really not ideal it is best to grow them in raised beds or pots and containers. If you have grown strawberries in the open ground previously, avoid growing in the same situation. They are susceptible to soil-borne pests and diseases, so varying the planting position helps to avoid these.

Feed your plants

Strawberries are members of the rose family: they are hungry feeders and need plenty of nitrogen and potash to grow well, flower and produce fruits. They also need regular watering. Therefore a liquid fertiliser added to the watering can is ideal.

Vitax Organic Strawberry fertiliser is perfect, it is high in potash and organic nutrients. Just add it to the watering can when you water for great crops. When growing in containers, raised beds or hanging baskets the fruits are raised off the ground, out of the reach of slugs and snails and away from the soil, which can splash onto the fruits.



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This not only makes them unattractive, but traps wet and causes rot. You need to keep the ripening fruits off the soil.

Traditionally this was done with straw, however Vitax Mulch Mats make life much easier. These clever mats just fit around the plants, helping to suppress weeds, conserve moisture and they keep the fruit off the ground. They are completely bio-degradable so there is no need to remove them at the end of the season. Try them around lettuces too; they avoid all those gritty deposits between the leaves.



Strawberries are such appealing fruits and will fit into any garden. You see results quickly, there is no pruning involved and they are inexpensive to buy. Children love them; what better way to get youngsters involved in the garden?




Andy McIndoe for Vitax

What you will need to create your shopping list



Organic Strawberry Fertiliser



Vitax Q4



John Innes No.3 Compost



Mulch Mats

Get in touch

For more garden inspiration and advice, visit the website at: www.gardenworld.co.uk

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