



GROWING STRAWBERRIES IN CANBERRA

There's always a place to grow delicious strawberries at home. Garden beds, pots, hanging baskets, or vertical gardens will all provide adequate space for growing this tasty fruit. Economical bare-rooted runners of the Red Gauntlet variety are available during the winter months, while potted plants can be bought year-round. All are well suited to the Canberra region's climate.

WHAT DO I NEED?

- A sunny place with good air circulation - at *least* half a day of sun.
- Good drainage - no wet feet.
- Soil well prepared with lots of manure, organic matter and fertiliser - OR a good quality potting mix.
- A bit of added lime or dolomite - they prefer a neutral pH.
- Generous mulch or weed mat to hold the fruit off the soil.
- Regular watering, ensuring you keep the leaves and fruit dry at night to avoid disease - drippers are ideal.
- Regular fertiliser for good fruiting.
- Good quality, virus-free strawberry plants to start with!

HOW DO I GROW STRAWBERRIES?

- Prepare the planting bed in advance with lots of well rotted cow manure, compost and a complete plant food - we recommend *Healthy Earth* fertilisers. A raised bed is ideal, or you can mound the soil to ensure good drainage. Canberra soils will usually need a little garden lime or dolomite added to make them neutral pH, and you might need Clay-breaker to deal with heavy clay soils.
- Plant bare-root crowns promptly after purchase or plant potted plants at any time, ensuring that the top of the crown is at soil level and the roots are spread out. Space plants 30cms apart. Water in with *Healthy Earth Liquid Fertiliser* and Seasol to help them settle.
- Mulch with Pea straw, Lucerne or Sugar Cane, or use Weed mat to keep the fruit off the soil (if using weed mat, simply plant through slits made in the fabric). Water regularly during the growing season, especially when hot and/or windy, and fertilise regularly with *Healthy Earth*.
- Tidy up dead leaves at the end of summer and lightly dig in manure and fertiliser in late winter.

TIPS

- Remove runners to encourage plants to focus on fruit production.
- Choose a mix of early and late varieties to keep you munching fruit from mid-spring until autumn. Red Gauntlet and Tioga are classics but have fun with the many new varieties released in recent years. Some have pretty pink flowers and some have a taste of pineapples or bubblegum!
- Replace plants every 3-4 years, as older plants become less productive. Re-plant in a new spot that hasn't grown strawberries for a few years (this helps avoid disease).
- Protect the fruit from snails, slugs and birds.