



# Harvest of the Month

# STRAWBERRIES



## All About Strawberries-

The sweet, delicious first fruit of Spring!

Enjoy them straight from the garden or baked into a cake!



## Botany

Strawberries come in two main growing types; those that flower and set fruit from spring until the summer solstice (June-bearers) and those that flower and fruit regardless of day length (Everbearers). June-bearers are very productive over their short season, but send out a lot of runners. Everbearers fruit steadily over a long period of time. They are not as prolific as June-bearers but work for people who want to harvest an intermittent crop through the summer and fall.

## Social Science

Wild strawberries have been in existence for thousands of years; in fact, no one can identify one region of origin for the plant. There are species of strawberries on almost every continent. However, the modern garden strawberry was first cultivated in France in the 1700s. It was a cross between a wild American species and a Chilean species. Strawberries are grown and enjoyed all over the world. The best strawberries are fresh from the garden; but a lot of research has gone into making commercial strawberries that can stand up to being shipped and stored. California is the leading producer of strawberries in the United States, and they are shipped all over the country.

Fresa means strawberry in Spanish.

## Nutrition

Just one serving of strawberries offers more vitamin C than an orange! These fruits offer a myriad of health benefits; they are anti-inflammatory, rich in antioxidants, fiber and more.

## Growing Tips



### Planting Preparation

Strawberries grow best in the western part of Sonoma County. The hot summers of the inland area can take a toll on the plants' health. Be sure to provide plenty of water throughout the summer and even a light shade cover in the hottest parts of the county.

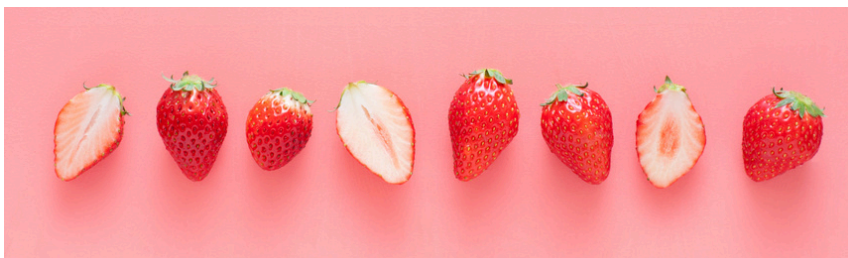
### Proper Spacing and Care:

Strawberry plants can be planted in spring or fall. Space plants 12-18" apart. Strawberries are very finicky about how they are planted; they can be neither too deep nor too shallow. The middle of the crown should be level with the soil surface. Also make sure that you have all the roots pointing down in the planting hole and that the soil is firmed around them.



### Harvesting Tips:

Harvest strawberries when they are bright and shiny red. If the color has gotten dull, they are past their peak ripeness. Keep your strawberries dry until right before you plan to prepare them.



## Fun Strawberry Tip

There is an abundance of pick your own strawberry farms in California. Harvest the abundance at your local farm or garden during the warm season, or pick some up at the farmers market, and enjoy them fresh or preserve them to use in many different recipes throughout the year!



## Cooking with Strawberries



Fresh strawberries are delicious in parfaits, added to salads, or eaten straight off the plant. Cook them down into a jam or sweet treat to bring out the sweetness, freeze them for smoothies or later use, dehydrate them for a fun and tangy snack, or blend them in to your favorite summer beverage.

For recipes visit [SGN's Cooking From The Garden page](#)