



## Strawberry Planting Guide

### About Strawberry

Strawberries, universally adored for their sweet, succulent taste and vibrant red appearance, hold a special place in various culinary traditions. However, the thought of cultivating these delightful berries at home is often overlooked. The good news is that growing strawberries from seed is a straightforward and cost-effective endeavor. These native North American plants are relatively undemanding, as long as their basic requirements are met. Keep in mind that this process may require some patience, as it's possible your plants won't bear fruit until the following year, depending on your location and growing season. Nevertheless, with proper care and perseverance, you will ultimately savor the satisfaction of nurturing these delicious berries from their earliest stages.

### When to Plant

Begin the germination process about three months prior to the last spring frost date. Transplant seedlings outdoors when all danger of frost has passed.

### Where to Plant

Plant strawberries in hanging baskets or raised beds where seedlings can be spaced 12 inches apart. Plant them in a full sun location with well-drained, sandy loam to fertile soil that is enriched with compost for optimal growth. Mulch around the plants with straw or plastic to suppress weed growth, retain moisture, and protect the developing strawberries from contact with soil, which can cause rot.

### How to Plant

To enhance germination, cold-treat the strawberry seeds by sowing them into moist soil or a moist paper towel, then wrap them in a clear plastic bag and place them in the refrigerator for two to three weeks. Ten to twelve weeks before the last expected frost date in your area, sow these cold-treated seeds on the soil surface by gently pressing them into the soil. Strawberry seeds require light to germinate. Provide a warm environment with soil temperatures between 65° to 75°F until germination occurs. Transplant the seedlings when they have at least three sets of leaves.

Direct sowing strawberries outdoors is not recommended, as they have specific germination requirements that are better controlled indoors.

### Caring for Strawberry

To promote strong root development in the seedlings, remove the flowers for the first month or two after transplanting. This allows the plant to focus its energy on establishing a robust root system. Keep beds evenly moist by using drip irrigation if possible, and avoid wetting fruit. Plants need one to one and a half inches of water per week during the growing season, while pinching off runners to keep plants productive.