

Strawberries

Strawberries are a challenge to grow successfully here in Central Texas. Many gardeners are willing to embrace this challenge for the beautiful sweet fruits in the spring. The ideal time to plant strawberries in Central Texas is in the fall – the earlier the better. *Here, strawberries are treated as an annual that is pulled up when the plant stops producing and begins to suffer from the heat.* Spring planting works best in N and W Texas.

To prepare existing soil for strawberries, mix in one of our **good quality composts**. The resulting blend should be about 50:50 compost and soil. At the same time, mix in a quality dry **all purpose organic fertilizer** and a **mineral supplement**. A **streptomyces** addition may be added as a disease preventative. Coffee grounds can also be mixed in to help lower pH. If you have shallow soil or poor drainage, make a raised bed for your strawberries. Use a **quality prepared soil** and add all of the amendments listed above except for the compost. The ideal strawberry bed is 10”-12” deep. Strawberries can also be planted in a hanging basket, strawberry pot, or other container. Choose a good potting soil and mix in all the amendments listed above, omit the compost.

Plant the strawberries 12” apart. Proper planting depth is also important. For bare root plants, dig a hole for each strawberry plant and make a small hill in the center of the hole. Spread the roots out on top of the hill, and plant to a depth where the soil line falls right in the middle of the crown. (See diagram below). After planting either bare root or containerized strawberries, water immediately. Follow with a drench of seaweed to help prevent transplant shock. **Liquid seaweed** may be used every week or two to strengthen and feed plants. Cover strawberries thoroughly with **heavy wt. Row Cover** during freezes.

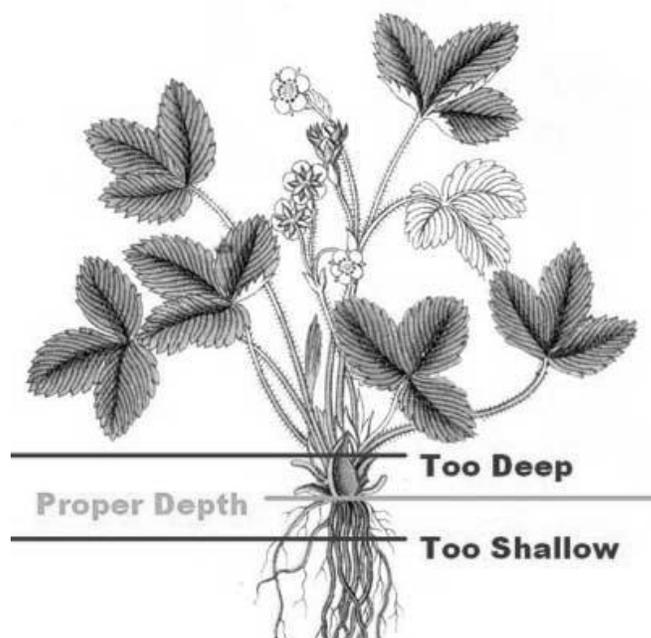


Diagram from <http://strawberryplants.org/>

For successful berry production, keep strawberries well watered, but not soggy. Use a minimum of three inches of mulch over the strawberry bed. **Pine Straw** is an especially nice choice. Continue to sprinkle coffee grounds over the soil about every week or two – even on top of the mulch. *As hard as it may be, it is recommended to pinch off all runners and flowers until the end of December in order to produce a stronger mother plant.* Then, when all conditions are right, a nice crop of strawberries should come in around April. To prevent birds from pilfering fruits when plants begin producing, you can cover them with **lt wt. Row Cover** or hang **Holographic Scare Tape**. **Sluggo-Plus** is also useful once every week or two to prevent pill bugs (roly-polies) from harvesting your strawberries. Enjoy!

Strawberry varieties for Central Texas

Albion – Very large, Bright red, firm conical fruit with a very sweet good flavor. This variety is a very heavy producer with regular water and fertilizer.

Camino Real – Large dark red fruit with very good flavor. Produces large quantities of firm tasty fruit.

Chandler – A medium to large strawberry; Brilliant red color and exceptional flavor; Medium firm, long, wedge-shaped to conical; Vigorous and high-yielding; Very popular variety; May be susceptible to anthracnose - add *streptomyces* to soil.

Elan – Medium sized conical fruit that is great preserved or eaten fresh. A more compact variety than most.

Eversweet – Very tasty medium sized fruit that is great preserved or eaten fresh; Compact heat tolerant variety for the south.

Quinalt – Large sweet, bright red fruit on plants with great disease resistance and heavy yields; One of the most popular strawberry varieties.

Seascape – Large, glossy bright red strawberry; Conical to round fruit; Superb flavor and juicy; Performs well in hot, dry climates; Highly virus and disease resistant; Productive; Developed at U C Davis.

Sequoia – A very large, very sweet, medium-red strawberry; Large, wedge-shaped fruit; Big vigorous plant; High quality fruit is somewhat soft and perishable when ripe.

Sweet Charlie – Med - large very sweet fruit with a deep red color; Highly productive and heat resistant.