

Strawberry

Planting & Growing Guide

Questions? Contact us at (888) 784-1722 or helpdesk@groworganic.com



HEELING IN

When your bare root plants arrive, open the plastic bags immediately. It is best to plant right away, within a week of delivery, however if you cannot plant right away, you may "heel in" the plants to protect them and keep them alive (but still dormant) until you are able to plant them in their permanent spot.

Outdoors: To heel in bare root plants outside, pick a location that is shielded from wind. Dig a trench about twice as deep as the roots are long. Place in the hole roots side down and cover the roots with soil or sand and gently tamp down to avoid air pockets. Periodically check the root area, keeping the soil moist.

Indoors: To heel in bare root strawberries indoors, whether due to snow or a frozen ground, choose a cool place like a root cellar, basement, or garage. It's important to choose a place where the temperature stays between 38°F and 45°F. This is important so the roots neither freeze, nor does the plant break dormancy. Place the roots in a container with soil or sand and be sure to keep the root area moist.

SOIL PREPARATION

Strawberries require a loose, loamy, slightly acidic soil (pH 6.0–6.5) and full sun to achieve peak berry quality, but they will tolerate a variety of soil conditions as long as they have adequate drainage. Prepare your strawberry beds by turning under high quality animal manure or plant residue-based compost. Compost composed of cedar or redwood is not an acceptable substitute for high quality compost.

PLANTING & GROWING

When you are ready to plant, put the transplants in a bucket of water for a few minutes to rehydrate them and to keep them from drying out in the wind and sun. Dig each hole deep enough so that the transplant roots will not be bent or "j-rooted" when covered with soil. Next, prepare a soil cone at the bottom of the hole for the roots to rest upon when buried, keeping the roots as straight as possible. Finally, fill the hole with loose soil, keeping the upper crown bud at or slightly above the soil line, as plants will die if the crowns are completely covered. Once planted, strawberries will spread by producing "runners" where leaf cluster tips touch the ground. Consider planting into weed fabric, especially the Everbearer or Day Neutral varieties. Give all strawberry varieties 1" of water per week, preferably using drip-type irrigation to minimize berry spoilage and keep the beds thoroughly weeded!

After the first frost, mulch beds with straw or agricultural fabrics (ie "Floating Row Cover" or Frost Blankets). Where snow remains on

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Important Information

- **If your plants arrived damaged**, take photographs and contact us immediately and we will provide you with a refund of the purchase price, or a replacement.
- **You should plant your strawberries within a week of delivery.** If you are unable to do so, you can plant it in a pot or "heel in" your berries until you are able to plant.
- **In the rare event that your strawberries do not leaf out by May 15th**, we offer a Limited Guarantee on dormant plants. See the last page for details.

the ground throughout the winter, no mulching is required. When the ground warms in spring, remove any organic mulches, but leave agricultural fabrics on until the first flowers appear; fabrics will speed growth but prevent pollination if left on during blossoming. Strawberries are prone to diseases caused by overly moist soil conditions and overcrowding. Soil must be kept loose and well drained, plants must be properly spaced and ripe or moldy fruit picked daily. Snails and slugs can be a significant problem, but are controlled using traps and copper strip-barriers. Protect against birds with netting, scare balloons and flash tape.

June Bearers generally produce a single large crop in spring to early summer, as early as March in warmer regions such as Southern California and Florida. They are prolific producers for 3 to 4 weeks, and are a good choice for growers who want to limit their growing season for marketing or home processing reasons.

Since June Bearers spread their runners very rapidly, many growers consider the "matted row method" to be the most effective means of propagation. Rows are spaced 3–4' apart with berry plants spaced at 18–24" apart. Plants are then allowed to "runner" freely in all directions,

creating larger rows centered on the original mother plants, all flowers should be removed the first year of growth to allow for maximum runner spread. Fruit production will occur the second year from the runners. A post-harvest regime of mowing plants down to 2" and tilling to within 10" of the original row will extend bed life for up to 3 years. Tilling up the original row, and leaving second or third generation plants to form new rows can extend bed life even longer.

Everbearers are most productive in northern areas where summer brings extended daylight hours. These varieties are not as prolific as June Bearers but are especially suitable for growers who wish to harvest an intermittent supply of berries in the summer. Also, you will get fruit the first year after planting, unlike June Bearers. Many growers prefer to use the "Hill System," for Ever Bearers, which produce few runners. Space plants 12–15" apart in double or triple wide rows with 1½–2' between rows. Remove the first set of flowers after planting, and pull up all runners throughout spring and summer to increase fruit production. Keeping these varieties trimmed of old, decaying foliage will allow better air circulation across the bed and result in high berry quality. Allow runners to develop in the second season to establish a new generation of plants; production of the original mother plants will decrease after the second season. After the second year's harvest, pull out the mother plants, leaving only new plants spaced on the original bedding plan.

Day Neutral strawberries bear fruit from late winter until early Fall in temperate areas, and from early summer until the first frost in cold climates. These varieties are very prolific but are also more temperamental about their growing conditions than the other varieties; they fare poorly against heat, dry soil and competition from weeds. Since Day Neutral varieties send out few runners, they should be cared for the same way as Ever Bearers (ie. the "Hill System").

HARVESTING

It is important to practice proper "picking hygiene" when harvesting berries as disease can be easily spread if good fruit is handled after bad fruit. Always wash hands after removing moldy, deformed or over-ripe fruit and before harvesting your good berries. Pick ripe strawberries by pinching through the stem above the fruit. Never pull on the berry itself. All strawberries will last several days under refrigeration.

Return Policy

Perishable Items (3-Day Return Policy)

We guarantee the perishable items we sell to be in good, viable condition when we sell them. Perishable items include, but are not limited to, garlic bulbs, flower bulbs, seed potatoes, onion sets & transplants, bare-root trees, vegetable crowns... etc. If your perishable item arrives in substandard condition, please contact us within 3 days of the purchase date (or delivery date) and we will provide you with a refund of the purchase price (including shipping costs), or a replacement. Accordingly, we urge you to open any boxes marked as "Perishable" immediately upon receiving them. Because some perishable items can deteriorate very quickly, we cannot accept any claims beyond the 3-day time frame as it becomes too difficult to determine if these items were delivered in substandard condition, or if they turned into such substandard condition because of having been improperly cared for or stored once delivered.

Limited Product Guarantee

Limitation of Remedy

We warrant to the extent of the purchase price only that the seeds or plants sold hereunder are as described on the label within recognized tolerances. No other warranty is given, expressed or implied, of (1) the merchantability or fitness of the seeds or plants for any particular purpose, or (2) against loss due to any cause. We cannot accept any responsibility for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions (soil preparation, fertilization, weed and pest control, temperature control, irrigation...etc.) that must be met to insure the success of your crop(s) or plants.

Limited Dormant Tree & Plant Guarantee

* Claim deadline is June 15th

We guarantee that your dormant tree or plant will arrive in good, viable condition. If your tree arrives in substandard condition, notify us within 3 days of delivery. Please email pictures of the box, inside packaging, the tree and its roots to helpdesk@groworganic.com. We will investigate your claim and process a request to exchange or refund the damaged product.

If your dormant tree or plant has not grown new leaves by June 15th, you may be eligible for our Limited Dormant Tree & Plant Guarantee. This guarantee provides for a store credit for the purchase price of the tree, excluding shipping. Please see the Instructions below.

Important Dates:

- April 1st Dormant trees/plants must be planted in the ground
- May 15th Perform scratch test, if no new leaves have grown
- June 15th Deadline to apply for a dormant tree/plant credit

All required documentation must be received by June 15th for your claim to be considered. Claims or documentation received after June 15th will be denied, without exception. Instructions listed below

Terms and Conditions

We cannot guarantee that your tree or plant will remain alive and healthy after it is received, or bear fruit as there are too many variables in your environment that are beyond our control (i.e. soil preparation, weed and pest control, proper irrigation, chill hours, compatible hardiness for your growing zone, proper choice of pollinator, extreme weather, rodent damage, disease, etc.).

We cannot guarantee that we will be able to provide a replacement tree/plant of the same species either that same growing season or in future years. Customers are responsible for all shipping fees associated with replacement trees and plants.

If we determine that the tree you purchased directly from us is not viable, we will issue you a store credit (not a refund) for the purchase price of the affected dormant tree or plant. Shipping is not included in the dormant tree/plant guarantee. Store credits can be used to purchase any product we sell and are valid for use only until July 1st of the following year.

Historically, 98% of our dormant trees and plants grow and thrive when they have been cared for and planted using our growing guides. Dormant trees and plants must be planted in the ground by April 1st in order to be eligible for credit. If the ground in your area is still frozen solid, you may temporarily plant your tree or plant in a pot.

Potted, non-dormant trees or plants are **excluded** from this guarantee as they are not dormant at the time of shipment. Evergreen trees such as citrus, avocado and olive trees are not available for credit under the Dormant Tree and Plant Guarantee.

Instructions

We guarantee that your dormant fruit tree or plant will leaf out, if you care for it according to our growing guides. In the unlikely event that your dormant tree or plant does not have leaves by May 15th, follow these simple steps to apply for a store credit:

Before you call or email, please perform a "scratch test" to determine if the tree or plant is still alive. This video shows how to check for live tissue under the bark. Scratch tests need to be done a few inches above and below the graft.

Green Cambium Layer—Living Trees/Plants

If the cambium layer under the bark is green, give your tree a little more time. It is still alive, but hasn't come out of dormancy yet. Check to make sure that it is getting the right amount of deep root water, enough sunlight and that the weather is warm enough for that type of tree/plant to come out of dormancy. Every tree has its own personality and will come out of dormancy at different times. Be sure to submit the required documentation listed below by June 15th, if it doesn't grow leaves.

Brown Cambium Layer—Dead Trees/Plants

If the scratch test shows a brown cambium layer or if your dormant tree/plant doesn't have leaves by June 1st, please email us at helpdesk@groworganic.com. All required documentation listed below must be received by June 15th for your claim to be considered. To be considered for the guarantee claim, all required documentation must be received by June 15th. Incomplete submissions will be denied.

Required Documentation

1. Order number
2. Name of dormant tree/plant and the quantity affected
3. Photos of each tree or plant showing: The roots (tree or plant must be pulled out of the ground), the scratch test areas, the entire tree/plant

We reserve the right to not issue credit for items that have already been replaced. We also reserve the right to require photographic evidence that the tree/plant was not killed by root rot, rodent or mechanical damage.



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