

# Grow your own Strawberries



Strawberry plants are usually planted in November from plants that are imported from the U.S. or Canada. The variety that is most often grown in Bermuda is “**Sweet Charlie**” which is well suited to the growing conditions of Bermuda. These compact growing plants which produce large, sweet mouthwatering fruit are available for purchase from Aberfeldy Nurseries around the second week of November.

**Strawberries** like to grow in a sunny location in well drained, well prepared garden soil mixed with manure or compost. Green manure or compost should be turned into the soil if possible three weeks in advance of planting to allow for decomposition, whereas well composted manures or organic material such as **Black Kow** or **Black Hen** can be turned into the garden and planted immediately.



If your growing space is limited Strawberry plants can also be grown in hanging baskets, window boxes, containers and strawberry pocket planters.

Follow these guidelines to prepare your plants:

- Prune damaged roots
- Trim excessively long roots to 4-5 inches in length
- Remove runners and any damaged leaves
- Ensure plants are well hydrated before planting

When planted the crown of each plant should rest at the soil surface to prevent suffocation, however if plants are set too shallow the crown may dry out, and if too deep the crown may rot. Plant them about 10-12 inches apart in rows that are approximately 12 – 14” inches wide, placing the plants in a 2 - 1- 2 pattern. This will allow room for growth and cultivation as over crowding can promote powdery mildew. Water plants thoroughly after planting a solution of **Jack’s Water Soluble All Purpose 20-20-20** may be used. From here after if watering is necessary always water in the mornings as cool damp evenings where plants are unable to dry out will also encourage Powdery Mildew.

Fertilize strawberry plants about one month after planting with a **granular 6-6-6** or **10-**

**5-10** with micronutrients at the rate of one pound per 100 square feet. (An area 10x10 feet). Make a second application of the same fertilizer at the same rate again in February. A foliar feed with fish emulsion may also be applied. For organic growing fertilize with **Black Hen, Fish Emulsion, Bone Meal** or **Sea Weed**.

Regular cultivation should be done to keep weeds down and help water and fertilizer to be absorbed into the soil. Concentrate on fruit production by removing runners (long stems with new little plantlets at the ends) as they appear.

When fruit begins to develop place a mulch of some type under the plant to protect the fruit from sitting on the wet soil and cause rotting. Casuarina needles make ideal mulch as well as straw, plastic sheeting and commercial ground mat. The mulch will also help to keep moisture in the ground during dry periods. It may be necessary to protect the fruit from birds.

Plants should begin producing fruit for harvesting around **February** through **May**.

