



Strawberry Runners

Fragaria sp.

Strawberries are a delicious addition to your garden and are easy to grow! If you're short on space, they'll live happily in pots and containers. You can purchase them potted for most of the year or as runners during winter.

Strawberry runners are stems that run along the ground, producing new plants which take root at intervals along the way. These runners can be disconnected and used to start new plants.

How to grow:

Strawberries must be planted in a sunny, frost-free position. To prepare the bed for strawberries, give the soil a good work over with the addition of well-rotted cow manure and compost. Strawberries will not grow in water-logged, clay soils, so it is important that the soil is friable. To break up heavy soil, mix in some gypsum and compost.

Trim the roots of your runner to around 10cm long. Plant the runners 30cm apart with the roots heading downwards. It helps to form a mound at the bottom of your digging hole. Back-fill the planting hole and give it some water. Alternatively, strawberries can be planted on mounds covered with plastic, with holes at intervals to plant the runners. This reduces both weeds and watering needs while keeping the fruit clean.

If you're growing strawberries in a pot, basket or tub, use a premium potting medium with good drainage. Apply liquid fertiliser once your plants have become established.

Water is the most important factor in growing large, juicy, sweet strawberries. Place pea straw mulch around the base of the strawberry plants to keep the moisture in the ground, control the weeds and keep the fruit from laying directly on the soil, which can cause them to rot.

Strawberries need to be harvested regularly. Check for fruit every 3-4 days during the harvest period, as this enables new fruit to develop to full maturity. At the end of fruiting, trim off old leaves and clean up any mouldy fruit still attached.