

Strawberries



Strawberries. There are many plants whose life cycles are controlled by the length of the day or, put another way, the number of hours of daylight (or darkness) that they receive. This is true of most strawberries and so, it controls the types of strawberries that you can successfully grow here. There are short day strawberries (requiring fewer hours of daylight to bloom and fruit), long day strawberries, and strawberries that just don't care (day neutral)! Each of these also have temperature requirements as well.

Long day strawberries would seem to be perfect for our long summer days but—not so! It's too hot for them here since they can't flower at temperatures above 90 degrees. By the time the length of our day suits them, our temperatures are too hot for them to bloom.

Day neutral strawberries will not form buds or flowers in any temperature above 70 degrees so they have to be planted in the winter with berries forming very early in the spring. Typically grown as an annual crop, day neutral strawberries are not heavy producers. Day neutral varieties include Albion, Seascape, San Andreas and Sweet Ann.

In our climate, you will have your best berries if you grow your berries in the short days of winter. That means that you must plant your strawberries in the fall (late

September to early October) and protect them through the winter. You will have a lovely crop in the spring starting about mid-March. When your plants are finished producing berries, they will send out runners to start new plants. You can save these small plants through the summer along with your mature plants by protecting them with heavy mulch and shade cloth for a new crop next fall—or you can just order new plants in the fall.

Short Day Strawberry varieties:

Chandler is the long time #1 commercial variety and have excellent yield and fruit size.

Sequoia have a smaller fruit, dark red color but soften quickly and have a short shelf life.

Douglas is an older variety but an excellent one that has been largely replaced by Chandler.

Camarosa produces large flat and conical berries that are larger and firmer than Chandler.

Festival was developed in Florida and offers firm, flavorful fruit, and good yields.

Oso Grande offers very large fruit, high yields with variable color and flavor.

Camino Real is similar to Camarosa but with a darker interior and external color.