

New Gippsland Seeds & Bulbs



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STRAWBERRY CULTURAL NOTES

Strawberries can be grown satisfactorily in most areas that have a good sunny aspect and a well drained soil. Protection from early spring frosts and from hot drying winds will prove beneficial.

Avoid planting strawberries into soil that has recently been occupied by potatoes, tomatoes, capsicums, eggplant or a previous strawberry crop.

The use of raised beds, covered with black plastic increases soil temperature, improves drainage and reduces weed problems. Beds should be made 60 cm wide, allowing two rows of plants per bed. Stagger plants in adjacent rows. Mulch where plastic is not used, particularly in hot weather.

Plants should be replaced after the third year.

VARIETIES

Many different varieties are available, but the following give good taste and perform well in their respective areas.

RED GAUNTLET. Crops throughout the entire season and suits all areas. Good yield.

TIOGA. Firm dark red berries of excellent flavour and quality. Best in cooler areas and best in the second year.

TORREY. Good flavoured variety and particularly suited to hotter areas.

LOWANNA. Continuous fruiting variety cropping from spring to autumn, or later if conditions are suitable.

PLANTING

Place the plants so the soil level is just above the top of the roots, but below the top of the crown. Space plants and rows 35 cm apart. Ensure that all the roots are pointing downwards when planted.

WEED CONTROL

Where plastic sheeting is not used, continuous and careful weed control must be practiced throughout the year. Even where plastic sheet is used, care must be taken to ensure that weeds do not become established around the plants. Mulching is beneficial.

CULTURE

In the first year after planting, cut off the bushes 2 cm above the crown in late January or early February. This forces the plants to produce a third crop for the season. Cutting off plants is particularly effective with the Red Gauntlet variety. Water and feed heavily immediately after trimming. Remove any "runners" that appear from the plants.

DISEASES & PESTS

Strawberries are prone to a number of pests and diseases. Leaf spot and fruit rot are common, most of which can be kept under control with regular Kocide or Bordeaux sprays. Drip irrigation can reduce the incidence of the diseases.

Powdery Mildew, a disease covering the leaves with a greyish-white mould can be difficult to control, but regular sprays of Benlate or Karathane will assist. Good ventilation can reduce the severity of the problem.

Red Spider and Two Spotted Mite can be troublesome in hot dry weather. Control can be affected by thoroughly spraying the plants, concentrating on the undersides of the leaves, using Kelthane at recommended rates and intervals.

Control of slugs and snails can be achieved by using commercial baits or alternative methods.

WATERING

A good water supply is essential, particularly during hot weather. Plants grown under plastic sheeting can be difficult to wet, so consider installing drip irrigation to individual plants. Plastic can be perforated with a fork, the whole bed being watered by a slow but fine overhead sprinkler. Overhead watering during extremely hot weather can prevent fruit scorch.