



There are few things more delicious than a ripe, plump strawberry – except (of course) a ripe, plump, home grown strawberry.

# The complete guide to growing strawberries

Growing your own produce is an enjoyable and affordable pastime, that will help you fill your home with delicious seasonal berries – perfect for incorporating into salads, smoothies, bakes and desserts. And this simple pleasure isn't even that difficult to achieve.

Pay your local nursery a visit, don your gardening gloves and start cultivating your very own field of juicy, sweet red berries.

## How to grow strawberries

Before getting started, remember that strawberries fare best under temperate circumstances, and are most happy when planted in early winter (May – June). Once you've got your calendar in order, pick your plants (usually available in small pots) and settle in for a peaceful hour of planting:

### *Where to plant strawberries*

We're a fan of strawberries, and strawberries are a fan of well-drained soil. Full sun and ample space go a long way too when it comes to growing a truly successful, thriving harvest. In fact, 30cm between each plant is recommended, as they tend to branch out a little (when not interfered with by other contenders in your garden's array of flora).

### *What to plant strawberries with*

Strawberries have a few enemies out in the veggie patch. Avoid planting them near tomatoes, capsicum, eggplant or potato plants and be sure to remove any grass or weeds from the surrounding soil. You don't have to dig too deep either, the crown (or bulb) of the root needn't be fully covered.

### *Watering & plant care*

Regular watering and an optional layer of straw and compost around the base of the plant helps to lock in the moisture and keep roots plump and fertile. And don't forget, if space in the garden is limited, you can plant the young strawberry plants in big pots or hanging baskets – just make sure the soil is ripe and getting enough water.

### *When to harvest strawberries*

There's little worse than the crushed expectations of a hard, bitter berry. Learn to harvest your strawberries at the right time by watching for the red to creep three-quarters of the way up the flesh. Delicious.

## How to grow other types of berries

If you're wondering how to grow strawberries you're most likely also interested in how to grow blueberries, gooseberries, blackberries, raspberries and more. Heck, why don't we grow the whole lot?!

Most berries like moist soil and winter planting (just in time for a summer harvest), and a trellis to support the vines is recommended. Plant bare roots with ample space in between to leave space for growth, and don't forget to prune them back after fruiting.