

### STRAWBERRIES (*Fragaria spp.*)

**Check your plants immediately upon receipt, and remove them from their box as soon as possible. Transplant them into containers as soon as possible. If you are unable to transplant them right away, remove any elastics or ties and gently loosen the plants, then store in a cool place, ideally 28–32°F (-2–0°C), to discourage rot-inducing pathogens that can start to develop at higher temperatures. Keep roots damp.**

Starting strawberries in hanging containers from bare-root plants is easy, especially if you are using a greenhouse or another form of protected culture. Hanging containers of flowering, fruiting strawberries make a memorable Mother's Day gift, and Johnny's offers early-season shipment of 'Seascape', a popular day-neutral variety that can be ready in time for Mother's Day. Any bare-root strawberry variety can be planted in containers using these guidelines, but 'Seascape' is our preferred variety for this purpose.

#### LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Hardiness zones vary by variety; please see our catalog or website for more information.

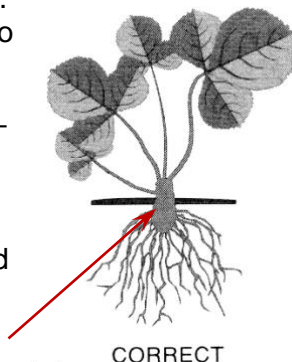
#### SOIL

A well-drained growing medium with a pH of 6.5–6.8 is required. Fill containers with the mix and water well to slightly compress the medium. Add more medium if needed to bring the medium surface to an inch or two below the container rim.

#### PLANTING

Strawberry plants must be planted at the correct depth, not too deep or too shallow, and the growing medium must be packed firmly but not hard-packed around the roots. Set the plants into position with the roots oriented straight down. A garden stake or thin wood slat can be used to tuck the plants into the growing medium by folding ½" of the root ends over the stake end and gently pushing the stake and plant straight down into the medium. The roots should not be bent to one side or the other.

Plant 1 strawberry plant per 3–4" diameter pot, or 3–5 plants per 8–12" diameter hanging container. Carefully set each plant so half its crown is buried and half emerges above the soil line (see figure to right). Take care when watering and cultivating the plants not to bury their crowns.



You can expect a finished product in about 8–10 weeks, depending on growing conditions.

#### TEMPERATURE

Strawberries do best at temperatures of 75°F (24°C) during the day and 55°F (13°C) during the night.

It's important to note that production and berry size may decline during the hot days of summer. Cooler temperatures in autumn will bring a return of berry size and yield.

#### WATER

Keep soil evenly moist. Strawberries do best when they receive 1–2" of rainfall or the equivalent irrigation each week, depending on soil type, container size, and exposure.

#### FERTILITY

Maintain optimal nutrient levels by using compost or a balanced fertilizer to result in healthy, vigorous plant growth. Over-fertilization can, however, lead to soft, disease-prone growth and soft berries.