

Growing Fruit: Let's Grow Strawberries

Have you ever tasted fresh strawberries picked right off the plant? You can enjoy this delicious treat when you grow your own strawberries. You can easily grow strawberries in containers placed in a sunny spot.

You need: containers
container soil mix
strawberry plants
soluble fertilizer



1. **Plant** at least one large or three small containers of strawberries. You can use hanging baskets, a sturdy wooden box, or large plastic or clay pots for growing strawberries.
2. **Buy** your strawberry plants at a local nursery or garden shop in the spring, or you can **order** them by mail. The strawberry plants should be **planted** in the containers as soon as you get them. If you can't plant them right away, **keep** them according to the packers' instructions.
3. **How to plant your strawberries:** Be very careful how you plant the strawberries. **Look** at one of your plants. The point where the roots meet the leaf stems is called the *crown*. You must **place** the plant so the crown is just at the soil line, not above or below it.



Incorrect



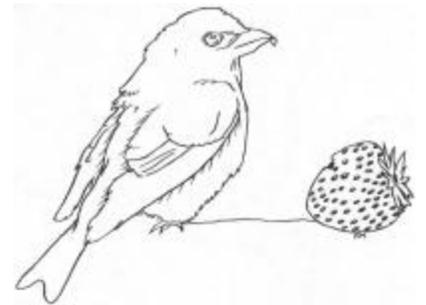
Correct

Fill each container 2/3 full of soil mix. Next, build a mound of soil at each spot you want a plant. (Place plants 6 to 8 inches apart in a large container or one plant in each small container.) Arrange one plant on each mound so that the crown is at the top of the mound and the roots spread down all of the sides. Fill the container with soil until it reaches the top of the mounds. Be careful no to cover the crowns.

4. **Water** the plants. It is easy to water strawberries too much, especially when they are first planted, so **make sure** the soil is dry about an inch deep before watering again.
5. **Keep** your strawberry plants in a sunny spot where they will get eight hours or more of sunlight each day.

6. Fertilize your plants according to the directions on the fertilizer bag.

7. When your berries start to turn red, you may need to protect them from birds. You can **use** cheesecloth or old, washed nylon stockings that you have cut open. **Fasten** the cloth or stocking securely over the plants. This will let in sunshine and keep out birds. You can also **hang** aluminum pie pans or trays nearby so that they bang together in the wind. The noise helps scare away the birds.



8. After it produces berries, your strawberry plants may grow *runners*, which are long stems that grow along the ground and produce new strawberry plants on the ends. You can **start** new plants with these runners. **Put** another container with soil in it next to the first one. Gently, **stake** down the baby runner plant with small sticks. When the runner plant grows roots, **cut** it off from the original plant. **Care** for the new plant just like your original plants.

