

## Starting a New Strawberry Bed from Bareroots or Runners



I'm setting up new strawberry beds this Spring with Everbearing Strawberries. My current bed has about 3500 strawberry plants, however I lost a lot from freezing over the winter. I have two patches that I cycle back and forth between every four or five years. The old patch is grown over with serious weeds and is overrun with new little plants from runners. There are so many weeds that that patch doesn't produce much in berries if any. I decided that this is the year to rework that patch with raised beds as long as I had help available. <http://img809.imageshack.us/img809/8950/sb12.jpg>



<http://img853.imageshack.us/img853/916/sb180.jpg> The old bed is a real mess, so I decided to put in raised beds, new composted soil with a correct Ph (5.0 Ph). Yes, 5.0. I know there are websites telling you 6.0 or 6.5, but I have been growing strawberries for 40 years and take a very scientific approach to maintaining Ph, proper feeding and maintenance. I harvested 1500 pounds of Strawberries in 2009 from 2500 plants, and 1100 pounds from 3500 plants last year, when the big growers had the worst year ever. That's averaging 9.6 ounces per everbearing plant, which is 30% more than the big grower average. Junebearing average 10-12 ounces per season, Everbearing average 6-7 ounces per season and Day Neutral average 4-5

ounces per season. This is because Junebearing have one big harvest per season lasting 3-4 weeks, while Everbearing have one large June crop, and two smaller crops, with sporadic berries in between. Day Neutral produce berries from last frost to first frost, or in warm climates, year-round.



<http://img542.imageshack.us/img542/1644/sb181.jpg>



<http://img842.imageshack.us/img842/84/sb182.jpg>



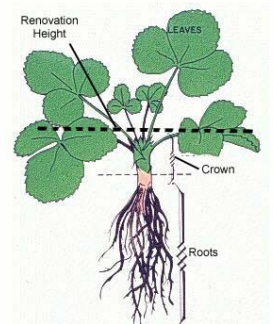
<http://img831.imageshack.us/img831/3673/sb183.jpg>

I dig up the rooted runners making sure I have as much of the roots as possible. I use a spade to make sure I got all the roots. Strawberries don't mind that you disturb the root; however they don't like to have them ripped off the plant. I'm going to the trouble of putting in a raised bed with new composted soil and getting the Ph exactly where I want it at 5.0, so I really don't want to add the old soil into my new beds. I CAREFULLY remove all the dirt from the roots, trying not to break any of the roots, because that can stress the plant. The next step is to prepare the soil for planting the bareroot. I create a trough in the soil about twice the length of the roots. I really don't want to plant the roots deep, because I want to feed them and keep them moist. By spreading the roots out shallow they will grow down on their own, creating a much stronger and healthier root structure.



<http://img528.imageshack.us/img528/8487/sb184.jpg> Next I separate the roots into two groups and lay the bareroot into the trench with half of the roots going into a separate direction. If you have a lot of time and patience you can fan them out in every direction, but it really isn't necessary. I'm planting about 3000 bareroots so this is a great compromise. I'll gently cover the roots with soil, making sure that all the roots are covered, and that the crown is not covered.

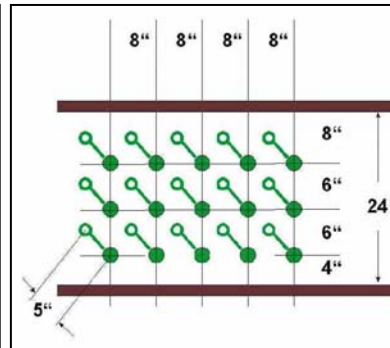
<http://img842.imageshack.us/img842/9790/renovationheight.jpg>



The crown is the base of the plant and should be planted so that it just extends above the soil line. I'll gently pat the soil down around the crown so it stays covered after a rain or watering.

<http://img688.imageshack.us/img688/4730/sb185.jpg>

<http://img848.imageshack.us/img848/7933/sb186.jpg>



<http://img210.imageshack.us/img210/7813/sb187.jpg>

I have 24" wide raised beds, so I plant three rows of plants with 6" between plants. I plant in a pattern a 6" x 8" between plants as shown in the picture. <http://img600.imageshack.us/img600/8595/sb188.jpg>

The current plantings are shown as solid green. During the summer, I will let one runner grow per plant and rooting it in directly in the center

shown as the green circle with white centers. After the season has ended, in late September, I will remove the solid original plants, and let one runner grow per new plant. Whenever you plant a new runner, you should clip any new runners and remove any blossoms for the first 60 days. This allows the plant to put all its energy into developing a strong root system. Your increased yields will more than make up for the loss of 60 days production, plus after 60 days you are getting both new and old plants producing. June bearing have a life of 7 years, and a peak production life of three with steadily declining yields after the third year. I prefer this method to renovating. Everbearing have a life of about 4 years with peak production life of two years, with significantly declining yields in year 3. Day Neutral have a 3 year life with diminished second year yields. Your strawberry bed will always be at peak production if you use this technique. **Shortcake anyone?**