

## Strawberries.

We think of strawberries as they are commercially grown in open fields, but many of them, including one of the parents of the modern strawberry, are woodland plants, and they can do quite well in fairly shady conditions under other plants. They have a good, dark green, heavily indented, foliage that makes good ground cover, and will produce runners later in the season to spill down the outside of a container.

Although they will not produce quite the quantity of fruit they might in an open spot there should still be more than an occasional treat. The plants I give away or sell are from runners that were taken from the parent last year and had all their flowers removed, that should give a reasonable crop even if conditions are not ideal. Under normal conditions the crop produced in the second year by this method will outweigh both first and second years crops put together when flowering is allowed in the first year.

Planted out early they will soon bush out to good size plants, but beware of packing them in, planted out one would allow three feet between plants, so the occasional one.

Their name comes from 'strew berries' because of their habit of strewing out runners, it has nothing to do with the straw traditionally placed under the plants to keep the fruit off the ground. When planting leave the plant a little proud of the surface rather than putting it in a dip, this lifts the fruit. Watering will definitely help fruiting, a reward most people find worth the effort, fruit just picked bears little relation in taste to the commercially grown. Strawberries will not continue to ripen after picking, there is no point in picking them and putting them on the windowsill as one might tomatoes.