

# Helpful tips given for growing strawberries

NEWARK, Del. — If you love the taste of big, luscious strawberries fresh from the garden — and who doesn't — then why not start raising your own this spring?

This popular small fruit is easy to grow, points out University of Delaware extension garden specialist Dave Tatnall. Strawberries take up little space, thrive with ordinary care, have few serious pest problems, and can produce amazingly big crops (at least a pint from each original plant). They can be eaten right out of the garden, are easily frozen, and make delicious jam.

The best source of strawberry

plants is a mail order nursery that specializes in fruit plants. They're usually sold in bundles of 25 or multiples of 25. Fifty or 75 plants are usually adequate for the average family. Buy only plants certified virus-free, cautions Tatnall.

Suggested varieties include early-bearing Earliglow, Midland, Fairfax and Redglow; midseason Guardian, Surecrop, Midway and Redchief; and late-bearing Sparkle, Jerseybelle, Marlate and Redstar.

You can plant strawberries as soon as the ground is easily worked in early spring. Late March through mid-April is the best time.

Select a sunny, well drained location. It could be part of your vegetable garden.

Prepare the soil as you would for any garden. Spade or rototill and level the surface, mixing in some fresh mushroom soil, compost or similar organic matter. Then spread about 3 pounds (6 cups) of a 5-10-10 or 5-10-5 fertilizer every 100 square feet and thoroughly rake in.

Set the plants in rows 4 feet apart, with 18 to 24 inches between plants in the row. Make the holes big enough to spread out the roots. Be sure the crowns (bases) of plants are level with the soil surface. Press the soil firmly around plants, then give each a pint of water or liquid fertilizer.

Remove all flowers the first year to encourage more vigorous

growth and greater yields the next year. Allow all runners to develop until early fall. Keep rows about 24 inches wide, with a 24-inch clearance between them. Since weeds, especially grasses, are a serious threat, hoe or hand weed your strawberries frequently and thoroughly, advises the specialist.

With proper care, next year your strawberry patch should be brimming with succulent red berries awaiting your eating pleasure.

Learn more about growing strawberries at the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Service's upcoming Lawn and Garden Expo Saturday, April 28, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Townsend Hall on Route 896 in Newark. Extension vegetable

specialist Ed Kee will demonstrate the proper planting procedures for strawberries.

Other features of the program include a sick plant clinic, tips on lawn mower care, a tree planting demonstration, and a display of lawn and garden equipment and supplies. In addition, garden transplants will be for sale.

The Lawn and Garden Expo will be held in conjunction with Ag Day, the College of Agricultural Science's annual student-run event, which features bluegrass music and square dancing, a petting zoo, pony rides, a chicken barbecue, and other educational and entertaining events for the public. Admittance is free for both Ag Day and the Lawn and Garden Expo.

## Hunting bill signed

HARRISBURG — Legislation introduced by Rep. Terry Scheetz of Lancaster County to curb crop damage caused by hunters has been signed into law.

The legislation, House Bill 686, was approved by the state Senate in late March and signed by Gov. Dick Thornburgh last week. The new law prohibits hunting and trapping in unharvested fields without permission from the farmer.

"I'm especially pleased that my measure was approved - nearly unanimously - by the General Assembly without substantial change," Scheetz commented. It's enactment now is especially timely, since it will go into effect in early July - months before the hunting season."

The law calls for fines and damages to be paid by those who fail to comply. Hunters who break the law would be subject to a \$100

fine and a year-long suspension of their hunting privileges.

The act also transfers enforcement responsibility from local police to state Game Commission officials.

"Farmers aren't the only ones who will benefit from the law," said Scheetz. "Hunters will actually have more land available to them once fields are harvested."

"By requiring hunters to stay off unharvested fields, the law would result in fewer farmers posting 'no trespassing' signs on their properties. Then, after harvest time, the fields would be open to hunting."

"Ultimately, all parties could benefit from this proposal," added Scheetz. "Farmers will have less crop damage, hunters will encounter fewer 'no trespassing' signs, and local police will face fewer enforcement problems."



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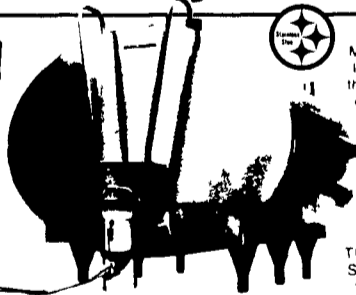
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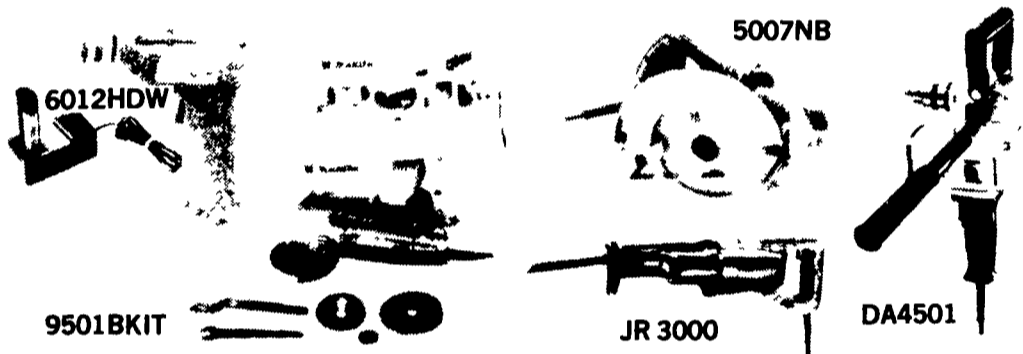
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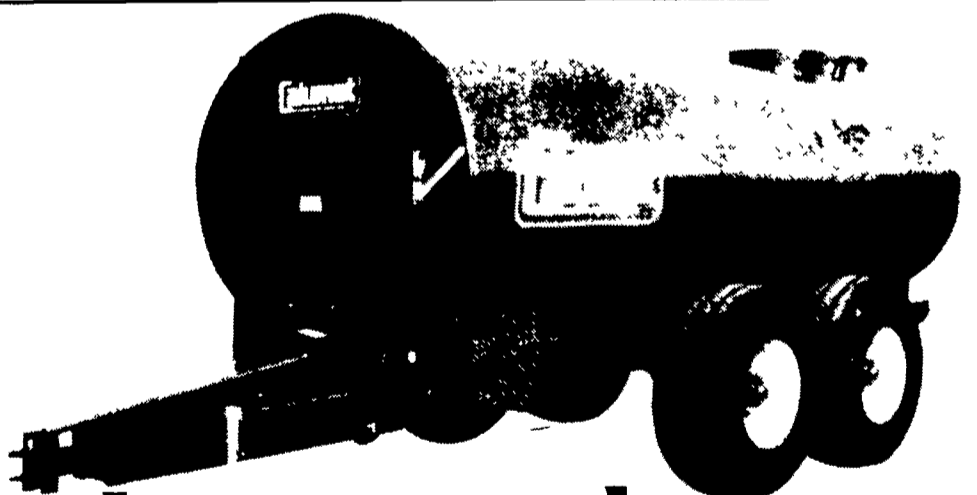


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