

## **Strawberries Offer Ripe Rewards**

**Sweet on Strawberries? Now is the time to plant them!**

**First, purchase certified disease free plants that are labeled as such from a reliable garden center. Choose two different kinds of the June-bearing type that produce one crop a year in late Spring or early summer.**

**For Zone 8, you may wish to plant 'Allstar,' 'Apollo,' and 'Surecrop.' Strawberries need moist, well-drained and acid soil with lots of organic matter and sunlight. In the garden, apply ½ cup of a 10-10-10 product per 10 feet of row in spring and August. In pots, feed monthly with a liquid blossom-booster fertilizer. Three plants are plenty for a pot, window box, or hanging basket.**

**Set out mother plants so the crowns (the points where the stems and roots meet) are exactly at soil level. Space plants 14 to 18 inches apart in rows 4 feet apart. Runners will then form matted rows about 2 to 3 feet wide- leaving you room to walk between rows. Remove all flowers the first year to promote better growth, more runners, and larger crops in future years.**

**Use pine straw or hay as mulch and remember to use flashes of reflected light to spook birds away!**

**Thin each row to about half its width, removing the mother plants and keeping the daughter. For containers, just replace the plants every three years.**

**Try this versatile and simple fruit to grow. You will be delighted!**