

of truth in the information I obtained. On the other hand the strawberry is an exceedingly gross feeder—a perfect gourmand so to speak—and not particular as to diet; stable manure, ground bone, wood ashes, hen manure, night soil, hog manure. It will thrive on them all, though it prefers to everything else cow manure, from its cool nature and abundance of nitrogen, and one is not likely to give it too much.

The greater the amount of fertilizers given the plants the greater will be the yield and size of the fruit they will give in return.

Besides being a great feeder it is a deep drinker. By this I mean there are few fruit-bearing plants that require a greater supply of water, or suffer more from the lack of it. Therefore, the folly of planting on light, porous soil will readily be seen. For this reason, also, is mulching of great benefit to the strawberry, which I will speak of more fully a little later.

I have said the strawberry is a gourmand, and very much disposed to drink. These are natural habits, and not acquired ones, hence good, and advantage should be taken of them. Were it not for these propensities, it would not seem possible for the plants to produce the enormous crops that it is possible to obtain. Therefore in preparing the soil, not only should it be well fertilized and well pulverized, but prepared deeply—-a foot at least and as much further as you will—for the double purpose of placing in the soil a large supply of plant food and to induce the plants to thrust down long roots deep in the soil to obtain it, and thus to withstand drought with comparatively little injury. There are so many ways and distances practiced in planting that I will attempt to describe none here, merely suggesting that the strawberry plant is one of the easiest to make live and to plant in a manner that will admit of easy culture. They look very pretty in narrow rows when first set out, but alas! the weeds and grass will appear, and like bad habits they are of a ranker growth and must be kept down or they will suppress all the good. If the patch is of much extent it should be planted in a manner that will admit of horse cultivation by all means.

Well do I remember my first strawberry bed. The way I planted it I could cultivate

only with the hoe and my fingers. How hot the weather! How long the days! How relentlessly did the scorching sun blaze down upon me while pulling the weeds from among these plants.

It requires a good deal of moral courage to keep all of the runners cut off, but such must be done in order to have fine fruit. Although easily clipped off with a hoe there is perhaps nothing in strawberry culture so often neglected, both by experienced and inexperienced growers. The latter lack knowledge, the former too often lack courage to put their knowledge in practice. But the plants should be kept in hills or single rows at best, for an excess of plants has the same influence as weeds in a strawberry bed, diminishing both the size of the berries and the yield.

In speaking of planting, I should have said the plant of the strawberry is one of the easiest to transplant if properly planted. A very common error (and one I made to perfection in setting my first bed) is to plant too deeply. The fact that plants of cabbage, tomatoes, and many garden vegetables live and thrive better if planted deeply, perhaps leads to this mistake; at any rate, if the crowns of strawberry plants are placed below the surface they will decompose and die. In planting, set the plants no deeper in the soil than when growing, or with the leaves even with the surface. The roots should be straightened and placed their full length in the soil, pressing it firmly on every side to prevent drying.

To be successful in strawberry growing as with everything else, the cultivator must be forehanded, and especially is this the case in planting, which should be done as early in the spring as the frost is out and the soil in a condition to "work," or as early in the summer as the plants have become well rooted.

Do not expect to excel everybody else at the outset; too many entertain such ideas and meet with such ignominious failures as to be ever after discouraged from making another attempt. In planting my first plants, no ordinary kinds would do for me; oh, no! and I planted wholly of the Nicanor, then a new variety selling at a high price; the result was that the crop was extraordinary only in its diminutive size in all respects.