

**STRAWBERRY CULTURE.**

A small work has lately been published in New York, by Andrew S. Fuller, entitled—"The Illustrated Strawberry Culturist." It is an interesting and valuable manual, and will be of great service to inexperienced cultivators. It comprises the history, and botanical character of the strawberry, with remarks on field and garden culture, the production of new kinds by hybridization, raising plants from seeds, &c. The following remarks from the work refer to the subject:—

*Time to plant.*—Although the strawberry may be planted with safety at any time from early spring until fall, yet there seems to be two seasons of the year in which it may be done more successfully than any other, namely April and May in spring, September and October in the autumn. August is sometimes chosen, but it is usually a dry month, and the heat being so great, the plants are more liable to die or be very much injured. Besides, the young plants are not so well rooted as they are when allowed to remain until September. I have always had better success by transplanting in September than earlier in the season, unless it be in the spring.

There is but little choice between April and September, except it be that plants carefully planted in autumn will give a fair crop the next season, while those planted in spring will bear scarcely any fruit until the following year. Some cultivators make a practice of planting in September and taking a crop from the plants the following season, and then plough the plants under and plant again. To have this plan work successfully, it is only necessary to have the ground very rich, so that the plants will become very strong by the time they come into fruit.

*Preparation of Plants.*—When transplanted in the spring, the half-dead leaves should be pulled off and the roots shortened one-third or one-half their length. This shortening induces them to throw out a new set of fibrous roots from the ends cut off, which they would not do otherwise.

It also causes other roots to push from near the crown of the plant. The shortening of the roots is beneficial to plants that are set out in the spring, no matter whether they have been a long time out of the ground, or have been taken up but recently, as the roots have become ripened during the winter, and the ends are always broken off in taking up, and it is necessary that they should be cut off smooth and clean before planting again. Not so with plants in the fall; for the roots of the strawberry continue to grow from the extreme end until cold weather sets in, and when carefully taken up before this, the ends are not broken, and if soon planted again they immediately grow.

*Choice of Plants.*—Young runners that are well rooted are always the best, and old plants should never be used if it can be avoided. When a variety is very scarce and valuable, the old plants may be taken up and pulled to pieces, roots and tops trimmed and then planted.

*Planting.*—Choose cloudy weather for planting, if possible. Draw a line where you are to put the rows of plants, keeping it a few inches above the ground, so that you may plant under the line; this is much better than to let the line lie on the ground, for then it will be in the way of the transplanting trowel; spread out the roots evenly and on every side; cover them as deeply as you can without covering the crown of the plants; press the soil down firmly around them with the hands.

If the weather should prove dry, give them a good soaking with pure water (no mere sprinkling will do) as often as they require it, which will be as often as the foliage droops. The rows should be two and a half feet apart, and the plants one foot apart in the rows. When pistillate varieties are used for the main crop, then every fifth row must be planted with a hermaphrodite variety, for the purpose of fertilizing the pistillates. Pistillate varieties will not bear alone, nor will they bear a full crop or perfect berries unless abundant supplies of perfect flowering varieties are placed in close proximity. Let no weeds grow among them, and stir the surface of the soil as often as possible; the oftener the better. We know that some cultivators assert that there is much injury done to the roots by frequent hoeing; but we have never found the plants as much injured by hoeing or forking among them as they were by neglecting to do either. Take off all runners as they appear, so that all the strength of the plant shall be concentrated, and not distributed among several, as a dozen small plants will not produce so much or so fine fruit as one good strong one. When plants are wanted, make a separate plantation for that purpose.

At the approach of winter, the entire surface of the soil, plants and all, should be covered with straw, hay, or some similar material, to the depth of one inch; the object being not so much for the purpose of keeping out the frost as to prevent the frequent freezing and thawing during the early part of winter and the approach of spring. As soon as the plants start in the spring, the covering should be pushed aside, so as to allow the plant to grow up through it. The question is often asked, whether it is necessary to cover the hardy varieties in this locality during winter? and if we should judge from the difference in the appearance of the plants in the spring, we might doubt the expediency of such a practice; but I have found it highly beneficial to cover all varieties, having tried several experiments the results of which were that on an average we obtained about one quarter more fruit when the plants were covered than when they were not.

The embryo fruit buds are formed in the fall, and are often injured during the winter and spring, and of course if there are but few fruit stems put forth, there is but little call on the plant to support them, and consequently the leaves have more food.

Usually the plants grow strong or weak in proportion to the quantity of fruit they bear. This would often lead cultivators to suppose, from the luxuriant growth of the plants, that