

HILL SYSTEM.—For a city garden, where land is usually scarce, the hill system will generally give very satisfactory results. Plant in rows 2 feet apart and 12 to 15 inches apart in the row. Cut off all runners before they have time to take root, thus enabling the plants to make strong stools or hills by the end of the growing season. Any blossoms which appear the same season of planting should be removed. In an unfavourable locality, where much alternate freezing and thawing is likely to occur during the winter and early spring growing in hills is not always successful, as they are more likely to heave with the frost, and the plants do not afford the same protection to each other as when planted in matted rows.

MATTED ROWS.—For this mode of culture, the rows require to be from 2½ to 4 feet apart, and the plants 12 to 15 inches apart in the row. Cut off any blossoms which may appear, also the first runners, until the plants have gained sufficient vigour to send out several strong runners at once, when they should be allowed to take root and form a matted row from 6 to 12 inches in width. All free-growing sorts make too many plants and should have all surplus runners cut off. The plants should not be crowded in the row. From 3 to 6 inches apart each way will give the required protection to each other and room to produce fruit of large size and in abundance.

CULTIVATION.

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The ideal method of cultivating strawberries is to have the land at all times in about the condition it would be if worked with a garden rake, and this can only be secured when tools with narrow teeth are used. If the soil is inclined to bake, it will often be advisable to break the crust that forms about the plants after a rain, and during the season it should not be neglected whenever necessary, to keep down the weeds and prevent the formation of a crust. As a substitute for the hoe, a light potato hook is recommended, as this can be used to work closely about the plants without danger of injuring them, and will leave the surface in better condition than the hoe.

During the first season the plants should not be allowed to bear fruit, and as soon as the blossom stalks are large enough to permit of its being done readily, they should be broken or cut out. When the plants start to form layers in large numbers early in the season, it will be advisable to remove them. This may be done with a hoe, or with some of the cutters made for the purpose.

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Nearly all soils are full of weed seeds. When these germinate and appear above ground, cultivation should begin. Frequent stirring of the soil will destroy these weeds, and during drought will cause sufficient moisture to be retained in the soil to enable the plants to make a strong growth.

Never allow weeds to grow in the strawberry patch. Cultivate carefully and thoroughly. By running the cultivator the same way every time, the plants that are newly rooted will not be so readily disturbed. Care must be taken not to stir the soil immediately around the plants, especially early in the season, as this is often the cause of their making feeble growth.