

PLANTS.

All strawberry-growers are aware that it is only the plants formed by the runners that should be used for the new plantation: these have yellowish white roots, and can thus be distinguished from the other plants, which have a long stem, at the lower end of which are black or brown roots, many of which are dead or broken. If plants of good quality, which can be depended upon to give large crops, are desired, those selected for planting should have good crowns and well developed roots. As a rule, only the first plants on the runners should be used. When the plants are allowed to layer freely, a large number of weak sets are produced, and although these will grow they give a small yield, and the practice, if persisted in, will result in the running out of the variety.

The best plants can be secured from fields that have been grown but one year, and which have not as yet fruited. The practice of obtaining plants from old plantations, although used by many persons, is not a good one, as continued fruiting cannot fail to sap the vitality of the plants and the runners produced by them will not give as good results as those from young plants. Whatever method of digging the plants is used, whether by spade, fork or potato hook, care should be taken that they are not exposed to the drying action of the sun or wind, and as soon as dug they should be placed in baskets, boxes or bags, and after being moistened should be put where they can be kept fresh and prevented from wilting.

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When the plants are being set, equal care should be taken that the roots are not exposed. If the soil has been so worked that a dust mulch has been provided, the soil that will be in contact with the roots will ordinarily have a sufficient amount of moisture, and watering will not be necessary, but should the soil be dry, a pint or so of water should be given each plant before the planting has been completed; this will permit of the drawing of soil about it after the water has soaked in, and the baking of the soil about the plant, which otherwise might happen, will be prevented. In setting the plants, a spade, dibble or trowel may be used, and if the work is properly done there will be little difference in the result secured. When the dibble or spade is used, a cut is made in the ground to the depth of 6 to 8 inches, and the soil is pressed back in either direction by a side movement of the handle; in the opening thus formed the roots are placed, care being taken that they are not cramped and that they are so spread out that the soil can be brought in contact with each of them. When large plants, with a thick mat of roots, are used, this is particularly necessary, as otherwise the soil would only be in contact with a layer of roots upon the outside of this bundle and the inner roots will become dry and the plant will wilt. There is also considerable danger of loss if attention is not given to the depth at which the plants are set; they should be at such a depth that the bud will be just above the surface, as, if deeper than this, there will be danger that, especially on heavy soil, the bud cannot make its way through the soil; while if not deep enough, a part of the roots will be exposed and the plant will be very likely to dry out. If placed perhaps a quarter or half-inch deeper than it grows in the field, this will be sufficient to allow for the settling of the plant and will leave it in about the right position.

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farm