

If fresh manure is used it will be better mixed with the soil before planting time, if it is applied in the previous autumn. Wood ashes are very useful for a top dressing, and from 50 to 100 bushels per acre may be applied broadcast early in the spring when the land is being harrowed, the larger quantity being used for land which is poor in potash. An application of even twenty-five bushels per acre should give beneficial results. If barnyard manure cannot be obtained easily, nitrogen and humus may be added to the soil by ploughing under clover, peas or some other leguminous crop; potash, by using from 200 to 300 pounds per acre of muriate of potash, if wood ashes cannot be obtained; phosphoric acid, by the use of ground bone, at the rate of from 200 to 300 pounds per acre before planting. Nitrate of soda is also useful for furnishing nitrogen, unless it can be obtained in a cheaper form by the use of barnyard manure or leguminous crops. An application of 100 to 150 pounds nitrate of soda broadcast just before the flowers open in the spring is sometimes desirable if the plants are not making vigorous growth.

Plants and their Treatment.

If the plants for setting out are obtained from a distance, they should be ordered to arrive as early in the spring as possible after the soil can be worked, and planted soon after their arrival. It is often, however, not convenient to plant at once; but in any case, the parcel containing the plants should be opened up when it arrives, otherwise they are liable to heat or dry out, either one of which conditions should be avoided if possible. The plants should now be heeled in in some place where the soil is well drained. Open a trench sufficiently deep to cover the strawberries well and so that the crown will be just above the ground. Now place the plants close together, but in a single row in the trench. Another trench is now opened parallel with the first and about six inches from it, using the soil to cover the roots of the plants in the first trench. The soil should be firmly packed or tramped against the roots so that the moisture will come into close contact with them. If loosely heeled in, they are very likely to dry out and the plants die. Other trenches should be dug parallel with the first two, if needed. By the time the field is ready for planting, these heeled-in plants will have made new roots and be in better condition for planting than if they had been set out at once.

The best plants for autumn planting are what are known as 'pot' plants. These are obtained by sinking two and one-half inch pots filled with rich friable soil into the ground and placing a new runner in each of them. These root and make good plants by late summer. The advantage they have over plants rooted in the ordinary way is that when they are transplanted they are taken from the pot and replanted in a ball of earth without disturbing the roots. Hence they are but little checked and soon go on growing again, making stronger plants, which will bear more fruit than ordinary ones.

Before planting it is a good plan to remove all the large leaves of the plant, except about two of the healthiest ones. This prevents too rapid transpiration of moisture from the plant before it becomes established and may often save it when dry weather sets in immediately after planting. Long and straggling roots may also be cut off at this time, the removal of about one-third of the roots being a good practice.