

# Strawberries

## Where did strawberries come from?

Strawberries are indigenous to both the northern and southern hemispheres. They have been found growing by the seaside, in the woods, and on mountain tops. The strawberry was first described in literature as early as 1000AD and the first sketch of a strawberry plant was printed in 1484.



## Did you know?

- Ontario field strawberries are at their peak in June and July. The new day-neutral or everbearing strawberries can be found from May to October, and thanks to greenhouses, Ontario strawberries are now available year-round!
- Strawberries do not ripen after they are picked.
- Strawberries eaten at room temperature taste sweeter than at a colder temperature.
- The fear of strawberries is called fragaria phobia.
- Strawberries aren't true berries like raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries. Strawberries are actually the only fruit that has seeds on the outside rather than the inside, and that's why they're not considered true berries.
- Each strawberry has over 200 seeds on its surface.

## Joke Corner

Q: What do you call strawberries playing the guitar?  
A: A jam session.

Q: What made the strawberry such a smoothie?  
A: Yogurt!

# How do strawberries grow?

Strawberries are a small plant of the Rose family that grows in all provinces either wild or farmed. Strawberries grow on vines close to the ground where the plump fruits turn bright red when ripe during June and July. Thanks to science and technology, the new day-neutral, or everbearing strawberry plant, now produces fresh Ontario field strawberries from May – October. About five years ago, a few Ontario greenhouse growers began growing strawberries in a greenhouse. Today, there are 50 acres of greenhouse-grown strawberries in the Leamington area. These locally grown berries can be found in grocery stores all over Ontario year-round.

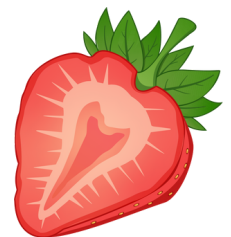
Although strawberry seeds cover the outer surface of the fruit, unlike most berries, strawberries don't reproduce by these seeds. Instead, the low vine-like plant sends out tendrils called runners that send down roots and develop new, fruit-bearing plants. These new plants can be dug up and transplanted to start new strawberry fields. The strawberry plants produce white flowers. Once pollinated by bees, the flower petals fall off and the yellow center starts to grow and becomes a strawberry. In strawberry fields, straw is put down between the rows to help keep down the weeds, plus it helps keep the strawberry plants insulated over the winter and keeps the berries clean when it is muddy after rain.

Everbearing strawberries are grown in long rows on raised beds with drip irrigation. The rows are made with mulch that is covered in tight plastic sheets and the right amount of water is trickled directly to the roots. This plastic layer helps manage ground temperature, reduces weeds, keeps the roots free of excess water and the berries cleaner as they grow.

Check out this 2.49-minute video from the Ontario Berry Growers Association for a look at how local strawberry growers produce your favourite berries.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkjj-m4jyvg>

## Activity - Strawberry Apple Salsa



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup hulled strawberries
- 1 medium tart apple, peeled and diced
- 2 Tablespoons liquid honey or brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp grated orange zest (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

In a medium bowl, mash strawberries; add apple, honey and, if using, orange zest. Stir to blend well. Serve with whole grain crackers.