

Plug vs. Bareroot Strawberries

Pros and Cons

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Plug Plant

- Mother plant grown in hanging basket to produce runner tips
- Runner tip rooted into 50 cell tray
- Takes 5-6 weeks to produce mature plug
- Grown by Nourse Farms for 3 years. Intend to increase production as interest and capabilities increase



Matted Row

- Standard production method for many years
- Lowest input costs



Plasticulture

- Increased interest from growers
- Produces larger berries
- More efficient picking
- Predominate system for planting day-neutrals



Bareroot Plant

- Most common form of plant used by growers
- Grown in soil, then harvested and packed during dormancy and stored at 28 degrees
- Nourse Farms has produced bareroot plants for over 50 years



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Plug Pros and Cons

Pros

- Require less time in field
- Plugs planted in mid-August in September will produce a full crop the following spring
- Can be mechanically planted
- Delayed planting eliminates overlap between harvest and planting time



Cons

- Cannot be planted into matted row system unless planted in spring
- Limited availability
- Most available varieties are adapted to southern locations
- Not available early enough for many growers

Plug Plant Production

It is important that runner tips are grown in the protection of a greenhouse or tunnel to create clean plug plants and ensure early availability.



Bareroot Pros and Cons

Pros

- Wider variety selection available for northern locations
- Lower cost per plant
- Lower freight costs
- 1000 plants/box for bareroot vs. 250 plants/box with plugs



Cons

- Must be hand planted
- Require careful irrigation management
- Must be planted at least 30 days earlier than plugs
- Dormant plant takes longer to establish and begin growing

Looking to the Future



- It is not far in the future that growers will be growing strawberries on tabletops
- Twenty years ago, Western Europe produced all strawberries in the ground
- Today, ground production is limited acreage
- Investing in this system eliminates concern with soil rotation, root diseases, winter mulching, etc.

Questions?

