
Takeaways for Cutoff Strawberry Plantings

ESTABLISHMENT

- Cutoffs are different than fresh dug and don't grow as quickly – be patient!
- Cutoffs have a slightly later planting date than plug plants
- Plant quality: cutoffs should have a well-established, fibrous root system and a healthy crown
- Cutoffs have already accumulated chill hours in the nursery
- Refrain from any “hard dates” as far as when plants should be at a certain growth stage/development
- Leaf emergence is about the same time as bareroot
- Planting depth is critical with cutoffs
 - Make sure crown is at soil level during establishment
 - If crown is above grade, possible winter damage can occur
 - If crown is below grade, possible drowning can occur
 - Cutoff crowns cannot be buried, nor can the root system be uncovered
 - Planting tool technique photos linked in additional resources below
 - **J-Roots**
 - Can be tricky with cutoffs; be careful at planting to prevent this
 - May have to trim roots before planting
- Growers who opt for cutoffs should be aware that they are best suited for coastal plain areas with warmer temperatures since they take longer to establish and develop branch crowns. There are a few growers who have used them in the Piedmont by using row covers in winter to push plant growth and encourage crown development.
- It is not advised to hold cutoffs as you should plant within 4-5 days of receiving them.
 - Refrigeration is the best option if plants must be held until fields are ready. Temperatures between 32- and 40-degrees F are preferred. Strawberry plants stored at temperatures higher than that will respire, sweat, and begin to mold quickly. Refrigerated strawberry plants need to be bagged and in boxes to hold moisture and exclude light. Again, the best option is to get them in the ground as quickly as possible. They will rot in storage, even refrigerated, if held too long.

ROW COVERS

- Growers who plant cutoffs will need to use row covers in the fall and winter whenever possible to encourage crown development
- Apply row covers as soon as plants seem established (usually around first of November), dependent upon location in NC
- Covering will help speed crown development
- Row covers can be removed after two weeks (usually around mid-late November)
- Growers in SE NC may not need to use row covers

WATER

- Watering is dependent on environmental conditions (wind, temperature)
- Supplemental overhead watering is recommended in addition to drip irrigation
- Initial irrigation with overhead immediately after setting is needed to settle the soil around plants and avoid any dry spots; follow up irrigation is needed for 10-14 days
 - On drier soils and under higher temperatures, growers need to water during the heat of the day with overhead irrigation (11AM – 3PM) daily
 - On heavy soils that do not dry out quickly, or where overhead irrigation is not available, watering might be achieved using a water tank towed down the row, with shower-head emitters to water the plants, driven slowly down the row to drench the plants and keep the crowns from drying out
- Begin watering by 11AM for 4 – 4.5 hours every day for the first 10 days
- Reduce to 2 hours every day for the following 2 weeks
- Normally less overhead water is needed with cutoffs vs bare root – still advised to have overhead water access to aid in establishment and to reduce potential plant losses

FERTILIZATION

- 50 units of Nitrogen at preplant; additional 10 units before covering or first of November

WILDLIFE DAMAGE

- Crows
 - Can cause problems by pulling out plants (usually a non-issue with plugs)
 - Air cannons, shooting, hanging up dead crows can be used as deterrents
 - NC Crow Season
 - W, F, & Sat. Aug. 2, 2024 – Feb. 22, 2025
 - Depredation Permit can be obtained via NC Wildlife Resources Commission if damage occurs outside of season (866) 318-2401
- Deer
 - Can be an issue when new growth emerges
 - See depredation permit information above

MITE CONTROL

- Generally, less mite pressure with cutoffs due to lack of leaf matter at planting
- However, always be prudent in checking for mite activity anytime row covers are on

DISEASE CONTROL

- Fungicide application before covering
- Refer to NCSU Strawberry Portal, in additional resources below
- Consult NeOP Spray Schedule via Strawberry Portal, in additional resources below
- NeoP is not likely to blow with normal winds from one field to the next. Spread is more likely to occur through rain-splashing of spores from one plant to the next (about 6 ft distance for rain splashing) or transport from one field to the next by shared workers or equipment.
- Organic growers can use sanitation/cultural practices such as removal of older infected leaves and by removing infected fruit from the field rather than dropping it in the row middles. Avoid overhead

watering. Howler is an OMRI-listed fungicide that may provide some disease suppression but likely not the same level as conventional fungicides do for conventional growers.

- Spread of NeoP to other crops has not been documented and is thought to be unlikely. NeoP can persist in the soil for weeks or months on infected plant debris like leaves or crowns. Remove, destroy or bury old strawberry crowns and debris to prevent carryover in the soil. Rotate fields to avoid re-planting in infested areas.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Southern Region Strawberry Plasticulture Production Guide, NC State Extension](#)
- [Southeast Regional Strawberry IPM Guide, Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium](#)
- [Best Management Practices for Neopestalotiopsis, NC State Extension](#)
- [NeoP Spray Guide, NC State Extension](#)
- [Neopestalotiopsis Strategies, NC State Extension](#)
- [Setting Bareroot Plants with Planting Tool, E. B. Poling, \(2003\)](#)

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