STRAWBERRY

Botanical Name: *Fragaria ananassa*
Family: Rosaceae

Climate:
- Irrigated mid hill regions of the state are well suited for its cultivation.
- It is grown on a limited scale because of its highly perishable nature.
- There is tremendous scope for its cultivation near the town and the canning units where the fruits can be utilized immediately after harvest.
- It can be grown both under sub-tropical and temperate climatic conditions.
- A day temperature of about 22-23°C is considered optimum for maximum growth rate.
- In cold climates frost damage and winter injury are major constraints for its production.
- Late planted strawberries are more susceptible to frost than those planted earlier.
- It can be grown up to 1800m a.m.s.l.

Soils:
- Well drained, fertile soils rich in organic matter and pH of the soil should be 5.5 to 6.5.

Recommended cultivars: Chandler, Tioga and Torrey.

Propagation:
- Strawberry is propagated by runners.
- Early formed runners are vigorous, have good root system and are more productive and thus should be preferred for planting.

Planting distance: 30 x 60 cm
Planting time:
- August – October. Late planting results in reduction in yield during the first year.
- Planting should be done on well prepared raised beds.
Manure and fertilizers:
- Apply 50 tonnes of FYM along with 40 kg each of P2O5 and K2O per ha at the time of preparation of beds.
- Apply 80 kg N per ha in two split doses. Half N in the month of September or after establishment of plants in September – October and remaining half N before flowering.

Irrigation
- Strawberry plants requires a lot of moisture and very sensitive to drought due to shallow roots and thus frequent irrigation should be given so as not to allow sub soil to dry.
- Irrigation is applied by flood method.

Mulching
- Strawberry beds should be mulch with dry grass, pine needles, grain straw or black polythene. It helps in the conservation of soil moisture, checking of weeds and avoid the contact of berries with soil.
- About 15 tonnes of straw per hectare is sufficient for mulching.
- Before mulching, the soil should be dusted with insecticides to protect the strawberry from insects.

Harvesting:
- Fruits are harvested along with the stalks when 50% of the fruit surface has attained red colour.
- Strawberry fruits should be picked daily in warm weather and 2-3 times a week under cold conditions.

Yield: 100-150 quintals per hectare.

Storage: Strawberry can be stored for 5-7 days at a temperature of 0°C with 90-95% relative humidity.