

Bulletin #2184, Strawberry Varieties for Maine

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The number of strawberry varieties available to small-scale fruit growers has grown in recent years thanks to introductions from both new and established breeding programs. Although many new varieties have desirable characteristics, such as large, glossy fruit and high yields, you'll want to think about other factors before you make a selection.



Ripening season is one factor. Early ripening berries bring high prices but are more susceptible to frost damage, and may not have good yields or high fruit quality. Mid-season berries supply the bulk of the market, but they vary in quality and growth habit. Late-season fruit can be of high quality, but it tends to meet a slower market.

Always start with high-quality planting stock. Poor plant material guarantees a poor planting. Order your plants from a reputable source, and look for nurseries that sell plants from "certified" virus-free stock. Then you can be sure that the plants have been tested by indexing, and found free of common viruses. Virus-free plants have the best growth and productivity. They will also live longer and be more profitable.

Order your plants in the fall or early winter for spring planting to avoid limited supplies. Ask for a shipping date based on the date you plan to plant, usually in May.

Always think about disease resistance when you choose a variety. In New England, red stele (*Phytophthora fragariae*), a root rot fungus, is common in many soils, especially wet, poor-draining areas. Resistant plants are the best way to combat this disease. Make varieties resistant to red stele a number one choice when you're ordering strawberry plants. Planting only nonresistant varieties could result in total crop failure, especially in a wet year.

The varieties listed in this publication are good choices for Maine. However, individual varieties may perform differently based on soil type, fertilization and renovation practices. Always plant several varieties to stretch out the season and prevent disease and frost problems. Also, test varieties in small plots on new sites before committing to a large planting. Despite glowing reviews from a nursery, a variety may not do well because of the particular qualities of your site (for example, poor drainage, short season, low temperatures). Finally, don't forget your customers. A berry may seem to have everything going for it, but if the customer or your family doesn't like it, it won't be very successful.

Early Season

Earliglow: An early berry of high quality. Fruit is firm with excellent flavor and color. Yields may be low in the Northeast. Fruit size tends to decrease as season progresses. Plants are vigorous runner producers and are resistant to red stele and verticillium wilt.

Mohawk: Very early ripening. High quality fruit with good flavor. Yields may be low in the Northeast. Plants are vigorous and produce many runners. Resistant to red stele and verticillium.

Sable: A recent release from Nova Scotia. Medium to large fruit. Flavor is very good, but fruit are soft. Plants are vigorous, with some resistance to red stele.

Veestar: A popular Canadian introduction. Very productive, good flavor, but fruit tends to be soft. Plants are vigorous but have no known resistance to red stele or verticillium.

Northeaster: Large, firm fruit with strong flavor. Good yields for an early variety. Shy runner producer, but plants are vigorous and perform well on heavy soils. Resistant to red stele and verticillium.

Evangeline: From Nova Scotia. A very early berry with a long conic shape and good flavor, but yield may be low in northern New England. Early flowering, so quite susceptible to frost injury. Plants are vigorous, but have no resistance to red stele or verticillium wilt.

Early-Midseason

Honeoye: A New York release. Generally early ripening. High yielding. Large, very attractive fruit with firm flesh, but flavor may be tart or flat. Plants are vigorous and produce many runners. Very susceptible to red stele and no known resistance to verticillium.

Annapolis: From Nova Scotia. Large fruit with good flavor and color, but somewhat soft. Very vigorous, free-running plants. Resistant to red stele.

Catskill: Large, bright red fruit with good flavor, but very soft. Plants are vigorous and very hardy, with resistance to verticillium, but no resistance to red stele.

Cavendish: From Nova Scotia. Productive. Large, firm fruit with good flavor, but with an uneven ripening habit. Plants are moderately vigorous. Resistant to red stele and verticillium.

Cornwallis: From Nova Scotia. Very productive. Medium-sized fruit with good flavor and color. Plants are vigorous and produce runners freely. Resistant to red stele.

Mira: A recent release from Nova Scotia. Large, light-red fruit with good quality. Plants have high yield potential and are vigorous with some resistance to red stele root rot and leaf diseases.

Brunswick: From Nova Scotia. Medium to large blocky fruit, attractive, dark red. Somewhat tender, and may be tart if not picked fully ripe. Very high yielding. Plants are vigorous with some resistance to red stele.

L'Amour: A recent release from New York. Large, bright red, firm, conic fruit with a fancy calyx. Good yield and vigorous plants. No known resistance to red stele or verticillium wilt.

Delmarvel: Large, glossy, uniform fruit with a fancy calyx. Plants are large, vigorous and moderately productive. Some resistance to red stele, but susceptible to leaf diseases.

Midseason

Kent: From Nova Scotia. High yielding. Large, attractive fruit with very good flavor. Plants are vigorous and good runner producers, but beds tend to run down after two or three seasons. No known resistance to red stele or verticillium.

Surecrop: Medium-sized, firm fruit of fair quality. Plants have moderate vigor but are resistant to red stele and verticillium wilt.

Guardian: Large berries, rough, and sometimes hollow. Light red to orange color. Fair flavor. Plants runner well and are resistant to red stele and verticillium.

Redchief: Glossy, attractive, medium-sized fruit with firm texture and flavor. Good production. Plants are vigorous but prefer heavier soils. Resistant to red stele and verticillium.

Jewel: From New York. Large, glossy, attractive fruit with firm texture. Productive. Moderate vigor and runner production. No known resistance to red stele or verticillium.

Mid-Late Season

Seneca: From New York. Large, somewhat irregular fruit, very firm and bright red. Flavor is pleasant but mild. Plants are only moderately vigorous and have no resistance to red stele or verticillium.

Allstar: From the United States Department of Agriculture. Berries are large, conical and light red to orange with mild, sweet flavor. The plants are vigorous and make runners freely. Resistant to red stele and verticillium.

Cabot: From Nova Scotia. Very large fruit, bright red, firm, but with tender skin. Plants need high fertility to maintain high vigor. Plants have some resistance to red stele, but the fruit is susceptible to gray mold.

Sparkle: Excellent flavored fruit, but dark red and somewhat soft. Fruit size tends to decrease as season progresses. Plants are vigorous, copious runner producers with some resistance to red stele.

Glooscap: From Nova Scotia. Medium to large fruit, firm and dark red. Good flavor. Susceptible to green petal disease, red stele and verticillium.

Mic Mac: A Nova Scotia introduction. Good yields. Large, light red fruit, firm. Plants are vigorous and produce many runners. No known resistance to red stele or verticillium.

Mesabi: From Minnesota. Large fruit and good yields. Vigorous plants, resistant to red stele and leaf spot.

Eros: From Great Britain. Large, blocky, bright-red fruit with good firmness. Moderate to good production. Fairly long picking season. Vigorous plants with some resistance to red stele and other diseases.

Late Season

Winona: A recent release from Minnesota. Large, firm, light-red fruit. Moderately vigorous plants with resistance to red stele root rot and tolerant of most leaf diseases.

Lateglow: From the United States Department of Agriculture. Medium to large, bright red, attractive fruit. Firm with good flavor. Plants only moderately vigorous, but resistant to red stele and verticillium. May lack adequate hardiness for northern New England.

Bounty: Uniform fruit with good flavor. Plants show fair vigor and runner production. No resistance to red stele or verticillium.

Clancy: From New York. Large, dark red, round to conic fruit with good firmness. Vigorous, productive plants with

some resistance to red stele.

Ovation: From USDA/ARS. Large, bright red to red-orange fruit with good firmness and mild, sweet flavor. Plants are vigorous and very resistant to root rot and some leaf diseases.

Day–Neutral

Day-neutral strawberry plants produce fruit through the late summer and fall; overall yields tend to be low.

Tristar: From USDA/ARS. Medium sized, bright-red fruit with very good quality. Low vigor plants, with fair productivity. Resistant to red stele and verticillium wilt.

Tribute: From USDA/ARS. Medium sized, bright-red fruit with good quality. Small but vigorous plants producing many runners. Fair to good productivity. Resistant to red stele and verticillium wilt.

Everest: From Great Britain. Medium sized, bright-red fruit with good quality. Small plants that do not produce runners. Best suited to high-density plasticulture systems.

Seascape: From California. Large, attractive fruit. Flavor can be poor if not allowed to ripen fully on the plants. Productive plants with few, if any runners. Best suited to high-density plasticulture systems. Hardiness may be poor.

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