

EXTENDING THE LIFE AND QUALITY OF THE STRAWBERRY CROP

Important Points for Spring Management

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Spring is peak season for the production and marketing of strawberry. What follows are several key points for maintaining both quality and yield of strawberries.



No. 1 Timely Topdressing

After the second stubble of the fruit crop, the commonly occurring phenomenon of de-fertilisation – which is mainly manifest by small fruit shape and decline in quality – is often seen. If there is insufficient light, the ground temperature will also drop.

In order to ensure the normal physiological function of the strawberry's root system, the application of RLF **Plant Milk High-K** can improve the low temperature resistance and promote root growth and soil fertility. At the same time, it can also promote better fruit development in the middle and late stages. An increase in sugar accumulation can also be expected, along with improved fruit weight and quality.



RLF **Fruits & Veggies Plus** can also be used to alleviate the adverse effects of low temperature and insufficient light in winter. With its unique biochemical chelation technology, it provides 12 essential nutrients and enhances the resistance of plants to stress.

The spraying time is usually selected in the morning or evening, since the temperature is lower, the leaf stomata open and the nutrients easily absorbed.



Strawberry also has a large demand for calcium. In the period of the rapid flowering and fruiting, the edges of new leaves often turn black and dry, the leaves wrinkle and the young fruit dries up. This is not a symptom of a viral disease, but of calcium deficiency.

Calcium fertiliser should be applied every stubble fruit, and RLF **Calcium Plus** is recommended. It has high absorption efficiency and can effectively prevent physiological and deficiency conditions.

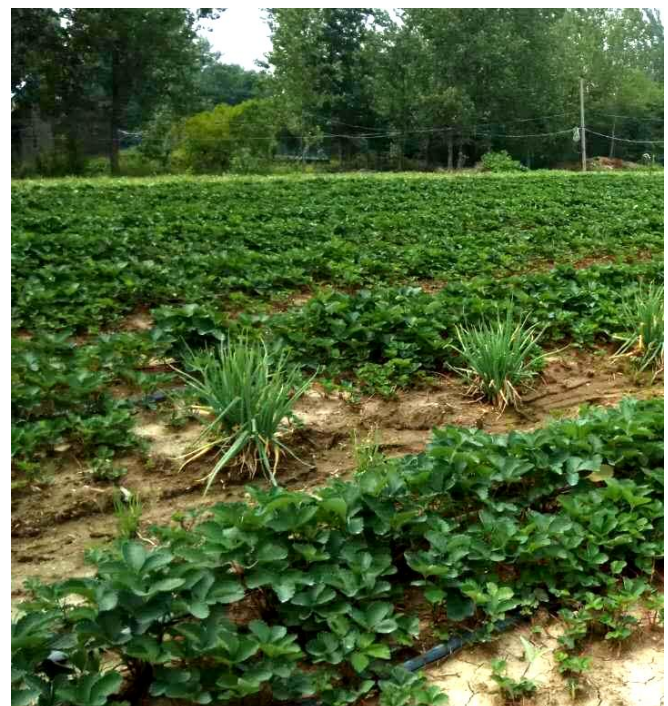


No. 2 Bud and Fruit Thinning

When the flower buds are divided into secondary inflorescence, they often form ineffective flowers that fail to bear fruit. Even if the fruit is formed, it often becomes ineffective because it is too small to be harvested. Therefore, the timely removal of invalid flowers, thin buds, small or deformed fruits, etc. so that each flower is left with between 3 – 6 fruits is advised. The nutrition is then preferentially supplied to the earlier flower buds and larger fruits to ensure growers get large, tidy and easy to harvest strawberries.

The principle of bud thinning and fruit thinning should be a small amount and done often.

Appropriate selection of lateral buds can increase strawberry yield, but excessive lateral buds will result in an excessive number of leaves and weak plants. According to plant spacing and strawberry growth, each plant should take 1 or 2 strong lateral buds with good direction. Then, remove the rest. The early stolons will consume a lot of nutrient and should be removed in a timely manner to ensure better nutrient supply and keep the plants neat.



No. 3 Appropriate Temperature and Humidity Control

With the arrival of spring, the weather warms, the temperature rises and the strawberry seedlings grow excessively. Therefore, the number or time of opening tuyeres should be increased to sensibly control the temperature. The shed temperature during the day should be maintained at 18°C - 25°C and kept at 5°C - 8°C during the night.

After heat preservation, the relative humidity of the indoor air increases markedly. Generally, relative humidity can reach 100% in the morning before ventilation, with the humidity in the air becoming too high after watering. This needs to be avoided. Excessive air humidity during the flowering and fruiting stage can induce various diseases, the most prominent of which is gray mold which is liable to cause a large number of rotten fruits. Reducing the relative humidity of the air in greenhouses requires two things when conditions permit:

- furrow irrigation under film, or drip irrigation can be used to reduce irrigation and evaporation, and
- to strengthen dehumidification management by ventilating around noon every day, being careful to maintain the indoor temperature.



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