

Perennial Fruits+The importance of timing when planting veggies

Perennial Fruits

Last year I planted more perennial fruits. Perennial means they will come back every year. I already have some but want more, as I really like fruit. Plus if they come back every year, you have fewer beds to plant out annual veggies but of course you have to have the room for them. So here's what I got in the main garden now.

Strawberries-There are 2 kinds of strawberries- **June-Bearing** and **Ever-Bearing**. I have June bearing-that means they produce strawberries in June and then that's it. Ever-bearing strawberries will keep producing smaller berries throughout the summer. The reason I like June Bearing is I only have to cover the strawberries as they ripen before they turn red, NOT the whole summer to keep the birds from eating them. June bearing strawberries produce bigger berries and after they're done, I uncover them for the rest of the summer. With all strawberries, you should take out mother plants that are 3 years old as they don't produce much but they do put out runners with baby plants, which are what you want to keep. Please don't use 'bird netting'. I had a bird get caught in it and died so I use medium weight row cover for their short season. Honeoye and Ovation are 2 June bearing varieties. Everst, Tribute and Seascape are some ever-bearing varieties. I got my starts from a friend so I'm not sure which variety of June-bearing strawberries they are.

Raspberries- I love raspberries! My goal is to have so many raspberries I get sick of them. NEVER!! Last year the variety I planted from bare roots is called **Polana** and I got them from **Norse Nursery online**. **Polana** is a fall-bearing variety that produces abundantly in our climate. You must give raspberries a little more water, so I just put more drip emitters around them while other plants that can use less water have less emitters. That way I can keep the same amount of time on both. We had raspberries in the fall the first year. We would get several handfuls every few days that of course didn't make it in to the house. This year is their second year in the garden and they are already up and spreading inside their bed, which is along a fence. Another good thing with fall bearing raspberries is after they produce, you cut them back to the ground in late winter. No need to know which vines are first or second year growth, as they will produce in the fall. I got this variety because someone else told me how well they do here in Santa Fe area and it is true!

Blackberries- Another fruit I love, and I think I can keep it more contained. Up in the Northwest they grow wild but we don't get as much rain here so we will see. Again I give my blackberries more drip emitters as they do love more water. I have two varieties-Prime-Big Jim, a thorny monster that shreds my hands and the one I really love is a thornless variety called Triple Crown, a semi-erect variety. You will have to put these against a fence or create a trellis for them. They will grow about 5' in either direction from where you plant them. Triple

Crown produces abundantly and no scratches. If the vines come back and touches the ground during the season, they can re-root and produce new plants. My 4 plants did do just that and now I have 4 more new plants from them that I will transplant on that fence line.

Grapes- I have tried many varieties of grapes but the one variety that decided to not die here for me is *Himrod*. There are other varieties I'm sure that will survive here but this one is a winner having been in the garden for 10 years and it produces green *seedless* table grapes that are delicious year after year.

Rhubarb- Rhubarb does well on my property. The variety I have is *Victoria*, and it is very productive throughout the season.

FRUIT TREES

Apricot trees-I evidently did not get a late blooming variety of Apricot tree so I rarely get apricots but the tree is beautiful. Harglow is a late blooming variety if you want to try apricots and is self-pollinating.

Peaches- friend of mine got called Contender from Tooley Trees and gets 150 lbs of peaches each year from just 2 trees. I now have one that is 2 years old and hoping mine will do as well.

Apples-Many varieties do well here as they put out their leaves first and then their blossoms so they quite often miss a freeze. But many apples need a pollinator as I found out. I have Braeburn, Granny Smith and never got apples till I got a Golden Delicious which is a good pollinator. Now I get tons of apples.

Sweet Cherry-I can not speak about them as I've never had any luck out here with them. I think it is too windy here on my property but I know there are some varieties that should do well in our area. Stella, White Gold, Lapins and Black Gold are some varieties. Black gold is late blooming.

Tart Cherry-Balaton and Danube are self-fertile and late blooming.

The Importance of Timing When Planting Veggies

I find the timing of when to plant veggies can be critical for success. May is a huge planting time for most of us so let's go over what to plant and when to plant.

Cool Season Crops

Spinach- It is now too late to start spinach. It will bolt when daylight hours are longer than 14 hours, which will be on May 15 here in the greater Santa Fe area. Longer daylight hours make spinach bolt and temperatures warmer than 80 degrees speeds up the process.

Kale and Chard are two crops that are considered cool season crops but do marvelous in summer as well as into late fall. If you like these two crops, still not too late to plant them. I treat it as an annual even though it is a **biennial plant**.

The heart of the summer garden-warm season crops!

Peppers-let's start with peppers. Do not, I repeat do not plant pepper transplants in the garden **until June 1**. Why? They will stall out and stop growing if planted too early and mid-May is too early for peppers here at 7000' high. They do not like cold nights. And forget about growing them from seeds now. We do not have a long enough growing season. I use to start peppers in February inside, under lights and on heat mats. February! Now I just buy transplants from Agua Fria Nursery who has many different varieties. I let them do the work!

Eggplants-Plant them as transplants on June 1 as well. Again I buy them from the nurseries.

Beans, corn, squash, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers and zucchini are warm season crops that can all be planted by seeds directly in the soil. I will put them in **end of May through first week of June**. Rollie pollies may chew them off at the ground when they first germinate so I use **SLUGGO PLUS**, an organic deterrent containing Spinosad. It controls slugs, snails, earwigs, sow bugs (roly poly), pill bugs, and cut worms too. I use to have to keep replanting the seeds until I discovered who was eating them. I put the seeds in the ground and sprinkle the Sluggo Plus pellets around where I planted them and once they germinate, I sprinkle a little more around the baby plants. Once they reach 3" high, you can stop using it as they only seem to like the newly germinated plants. I do however put **row cover** over the area where I planted as birds can be a problem too, liking the newly germinated plants as well.

Tomatoes! My favorite warm season crop!

High Temperatures-With the summers getting warmer, I had tomato blossom drop in June when they first produced flowers. Blossom drop is caused by too high a temperature or too low but around here, it is mostly caused by too high a

temperature in June when they first produce blossoms. When tomatoes are trying to set their blossoms into fruit, temperatures over 92°F will cause blossom drop. Last June, it was 92+ degrees most of June. The temperature for self pollination is critical at this time. The tomatoes will still continue to produce blossoms but will only set them below 92°F. They finally set fruit as the monsoons came in and cooled the temperatures. Tomatoes can handle higher heat, just not while they are setting fruit from their blossoms.

So last year, I planted them in the first week of May. It worked. They produced set some fruit before it got so hot in June. I put them in Walls-of Waters as I do every year to protect them from those chilly nights we get in May. Wall of Waters are suppose to **protect the plant from cold as low as 12° F**. But this is a crap shoot as May 15th is the first frost free so I'm putting them around two weeks early.

Where can you get them? Most nurseries here in town carry them. Call first to make sure they have them. They come 3 in a pak and are around \$15-16 for a pak. A cheaper source is *Planet Natural* online. Big box stores do NOT carry them.