



# Strawberry Variety Review

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The most critical aspect of establishing a healthy berry planting is obtaining high quality planting stock that has a vigorous root system and is free from disease and insect pests. The plants should be obtained from a reputable nursery that participates in a certification program to ensure plants are free from diseases such as viruses and root diseases. Mother plants or stock plants derived from tissue culture for starting propagation fields provide the best source of disease and pest free plants. Plants should be ordered well in advance of planting to ensure an adequate supply the desired varieties and plant sizes.

Strawberries are one of the most variable and temperamental of the fruit crops and the choice of varieties is extensive because individual varieties are often adapted to a relatively small growing region. The most commonly grown varieties in the northeastern U.S. are June-bearing types and new varieties are constantly being developed. Most varieties have weaknesses so growers are advised to try new ones on a limited scale to determine how they will perform in each situation.

## Variety Descriptions

### *Early Season*

**AC Wendy** (Nova Scotia) produces large blocky/conic fruit with very good quality and flavor and higher yields than most early season varieties. Ripening tends to be uneven leaving white tips and/or shoulders. Establishment of new plantings has been uneven. It is susceptible to leaf spot late in the season.

**Annapolis** (Nova Scotia) is a large fruited early season variety. The fruit is pale red and soft with good flavor. Suitable for local retail. It yields well. It is susceptible to powdery mildew and *Verticillium* wilt.

**Daroyal** (France/Spain) produces large, blocky fruit in the Honeoye season. It is new to the U.S. and little information is available at this time.

**Earliglow** (USDA, MD) is still considered the best tasting berry around. Primary berries are large and attractive and are suitable for retail or wholesale. Berry weight drops off quickly after the primary berries and yields are relatively low. It is susceptible to powdery mildew after harvest.

**Evangeline** (Nova Scotia) fruit is long conical in shape with a pronounced neck and generally small with low yields. The interior is pale, and it is susceptible to red stele. The fruiting laterals are stiff and upright which keeps the fruit off the ground and clean.

**Honeoye** (Cornell University, NY) has reigned as the yield king for many years and produces an abundance of large, attractive, firm, berries that are suitable for all markets. Closer to an early mid-season, the look of this berry sells it, but taste is the major drawback as it can be tart and can develop disagreeable aftertastes when over ripe or in heavy soils. It is susceptible to red stele disease but is manageable.

**Itasca** (MNUS 138, University of Minnesota) is a cross between Seneca and Allstar. It fruits early to early-midseason in New York. The fruit is larger than that of Annapolis, conic to blunt wedge shaped. Fruit flesh is orange-red with an average to good flavor. Itasca is resistant to five races of red stele, and its foliage is highly resistant to mildew.

**L'Amour** (Cornell) produces very attractive heart shaped berries with bright red color. The fruit has a very good, aromatic flavor with good eating quality. The plants are vigorous and disease resistant and remain productive for many years. The fruit is larger than most early season varieties.

**Northeaster** (USDA, MD) was billed as a replacement for Earliglow and out performs it in all ways except flavor. Yield is higher and fruit size and attractiveness are equal to Earliglow but the flavor is unusual. The grape Kool-Aid like aftertaste can be a turn off to many customers.

**Sable** (Nova Scotia) is slightly earlier than Earliglow and is equal or better in flavor. Unfortunately it lacks fruit size and firmness. This variety is only suitable for direct retail and u-pick operations. Frost damage can be a problem because the flowers open very early.

### ***Mid-Season***

**Brunswick** (Nova Scotia) has fruit weight and yield similar to Honeoye. However, it has a squat, round shape and tend to be dark and bruise easily. The flavor is good but can be tart when under ripe.

**Cavendish** (Nova Scotia) is a high yielding, high quality berry in a good year. However, high temperatures during ripening can cause uneven ripening that can be a real problem.

**Chandler** (University of California) is a standard southern variety grown for wholesale markets in plasticulture. High yields have been experienced throughout the Carolinas and California. Not well suited for planting north of the mid-Atlantic region due to lack of winter hardiness. Chandler is also susceptible to anthracnose disease.

**Darselect** (France) is a large fruited, high yielding variety. The berries are attractive and bright red with a long conical shape. The flavor is very good. However, it tends to be soft. It is susceptible to powdery mildew, which can be a problem in areas with morning fog.

**Elsanta** (Netherlands) is one of the most widely planted varieties in northern Europe. It is June-bearing with high yield potential. Fruit is firm and aromatic. It is susceptible to red stele, anthracnose, and *Verticillium* wilt.

**Herriot** (Cornell University, NY) is a new mid-season variety from the Cornell University breeding program. It produces large, bright red fruit that are uniformly conic in shape. The fruit is firm with good flavor. The plants renovate better than Jewel and are disease resistant.

**Jewel** (Cornell University, NY) continues to be the favorite in this season. The high quality berries are large and attractive with good flavor. Yields are moderate. On a good site, it's hard to beat. It is susceptible to red stele and can have vigor problems in poor or cold sites.

**Kent** (Nova Scotia) produces medium sized berries with very good yield, especially in new plantings. Hot weather can cause skin toughness. It is very susceptible to leaf spot and scorch and to angular leaf spot. It is very sensitive to Sinbar herbicide. It does not do well in hot weather.

**L'Amour** (Cornell University, NY) is an early mid-season type with excellent fruit quality. Berries are bright red and firm but not hard, with excellent eating quality and flavor. Fruit is long round conical with a fancy calyx, which makes them very attractive. No significant disease or insect problems have been noted to date.

**Mesabi** (University of Minnesota) is a very high yielding berry with large berries and good flavor, but does not store well. It is resistant to red stele and tolerant to leaf diseases and powdery mildew.

**Raritan** (Rutgers University, NJ) is productive with the fine taste of an heirloom strawberry. Raritan is very flavorful. Its small, deep-red berries are easy to pick. Plants are susceptible to a wide range of diseases.

**Sapphire** (University of Guelph, Ontario) is a late mid-season variety with bright red and large berries. It is reported to be tolerant of the herbicide Sinbar (terbacil).

### ***Late Season***

**AC Valley Sunset** (Nova Scotia) produces large conic fruit into the late season. The conic fruit tends to be a bit rough in shape but still attractive. As with all late season varieties, tarnished plant bug can become a problem and extra care at renovation is warranted.

**Allstar** (USDA, MD) is good yielding, high quality variety with good flavor. Unfortunately, the color is pale to orangish and is unacceptable to an uninformed consumer.

**Cabot** (Nova Scotia) produces impressive berries. Average fruit weight is larger than any variety currently available. Primary berries often top 40-50 g. The color can be pale throughout the berry and primary berries are often irregular in shape. Yields are very high. It is resistant to red stele but is susceptible to virus infection and cyclamen mites.

**Clancy** (Cornell University, NY) was developed through a joint venture with the USDA breeding program in Beltsville, MD. Its parents were resistant to red stele root rot. The fruit is a round conical shaped with darker red color and good flavor. The flesh is very firm with good texture and eating quality. The fruiting laterals are strong and stiff, keeping the fruit off the ground until they reach full size. No significant disease or insect problems have been noted to date.

**Donna** (France/Spain) produces large blocky fruit in the late season. The fruit is darker than Darselect with similar quality. It is new to the U.S. and has not been widely trialed.

**Eros** (Italy) is a light colored late season variety with large but somewhat squat berries that are not particularly attractive. Yields are adequate in good stands but it does not renovate exceptionally well. It is susceptible to cyclamen mites.

**Ovation** (USDA, MD) is extremely late. It doesn't flower until after most others are past their peak bloom. Fruit quality is average but there is little to compare it to in its season. Yields are moderate.

**Record** (Italy) produces large fruit in the late season with good yields reported. The color is darker than Idea which it replaced but still considered light to slightly orange, similar to Allstar.

**Seneca** (Cornell University, NY) is probably the firmest variety available for the east. The fruit is large, bright red and attractive but the flavor is only average. It does not runner heavily and can be adapted to plasticulture.

**Serenity** (University of Guelph, Ontario) is a late season variety that is also tolerant to Sinbar (terbacil). The fruit is large and bright red. The skin tends to be soft. It reported to be moderately resistant to scorch and mildew.

**Winona** (University of Minnesota) has very large berries and average yields but cannot compete with Jewel for fruit appearance. It has good vigor though and might be useful where Jewel does poorly.

### ***Day Neutral***

**Albion** (University of California-Davis) produces large attractive berries with good flavor. The color is bright red with little interior color. They are only weakly day-neutral and do not fruit heavily in the fall in temperate climates. Developed for plasticulture systems, overwinter potential and root rot resistance are unknown but doubtful.

**Evie 2** (U.K.) produces medium large beet-shaped fruit that are bright red. Fruit production in the fall in temperate climates has been moderate. This variety is relatively unknown and needs to be trialed more extensively for a temperate climate.

**Seascape** (University of California) is a day neutral that is seeing some success in the east. The fruit is large and very attractive. It is firm and good quality. It does not runner and is only suited for plasticulture. Over wintering can be a problem with this one.

**Tribute** and **Tristar** (USDA, MD) have been the standard day neutral varieties for the northeast for the last 20 years. They are disease resistant, vigorous and runner enough for matted row production. Both are relatively small fruited and low yielding but off-season fruit may pay off. Of the two, Tribute has better size and Tristar has better flavor.

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