



URBAN GARDENING PROJECTS

426-906

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small fruits

Have you ever tasted strawberries fresh off the plant, still warm from the sun? Even if you don't have an extra plot (or *any* plot) of ground, you can still have delicious strawberries that you grow yourself. You can raise berries in a container in most any sunny spot with just a little more care than you would give a house plant.

Make growing strawberries part of the Container Gardening project if you like. You will need to start this project in early spring, since growers only ship strawberry plants at that time.

If you have space and would like to spend several years learning to grow other small fruits (raspberries, grapes, etc.), see your leader on information on this extra project.

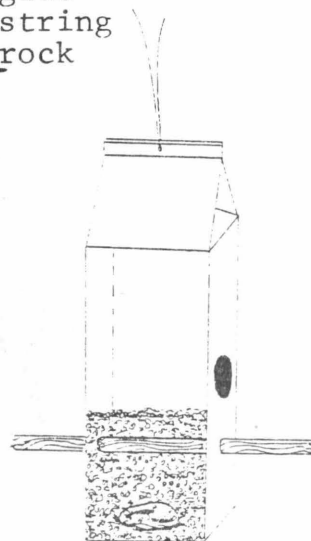
Just for Fun - Bird Feeders

Birds are known for their big appetites when it comes to small fruits. They *adore* strawberries and will get pretty brave about taking them if you don't watch out. Give birds something else to eat (maybe a few of your less perfect berries), far away from your plants, in a homemade bird feeder (but don't count on that stopping them!). Don't forget to leave your birds some water, too.

You'll need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ gallon milk carton a stick about a foot long string or wire knife or exacto-knife paint or other decoration (optional) rock 	or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knife or exacto-knife 1 gallon milk jug large aluminum pie plate glue string rock
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Milk carton feeder

1. Measure 3" from the bottom of the milk carton on two opposite sides, and cut a hole in each side about 3½" in diameter (so a bird can poke its head in).
2. Then make holes large enough for your stick just beneath the big holes, and put your stick through them. It should stick out of both sides so birds can perch on it while they are eating.

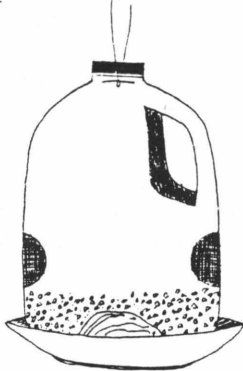


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3. Run a heavy string or piece of wire through the top of the carton so you can hang the feeder up. Paint or decorate your feeder if you like. A heavy rock or other weight in the bottom will help keep the feeder from blowing around too much. Get someone to help you hang the feeder up where pets can't reach it and where it is out of direct sunlight. Fill the feeder with seed, bread crumbs, fat or suet, or left-over fruit. It may take awhile for birds to find it, but keep your eyes open and they will eventually come around.

Milk jug feeder

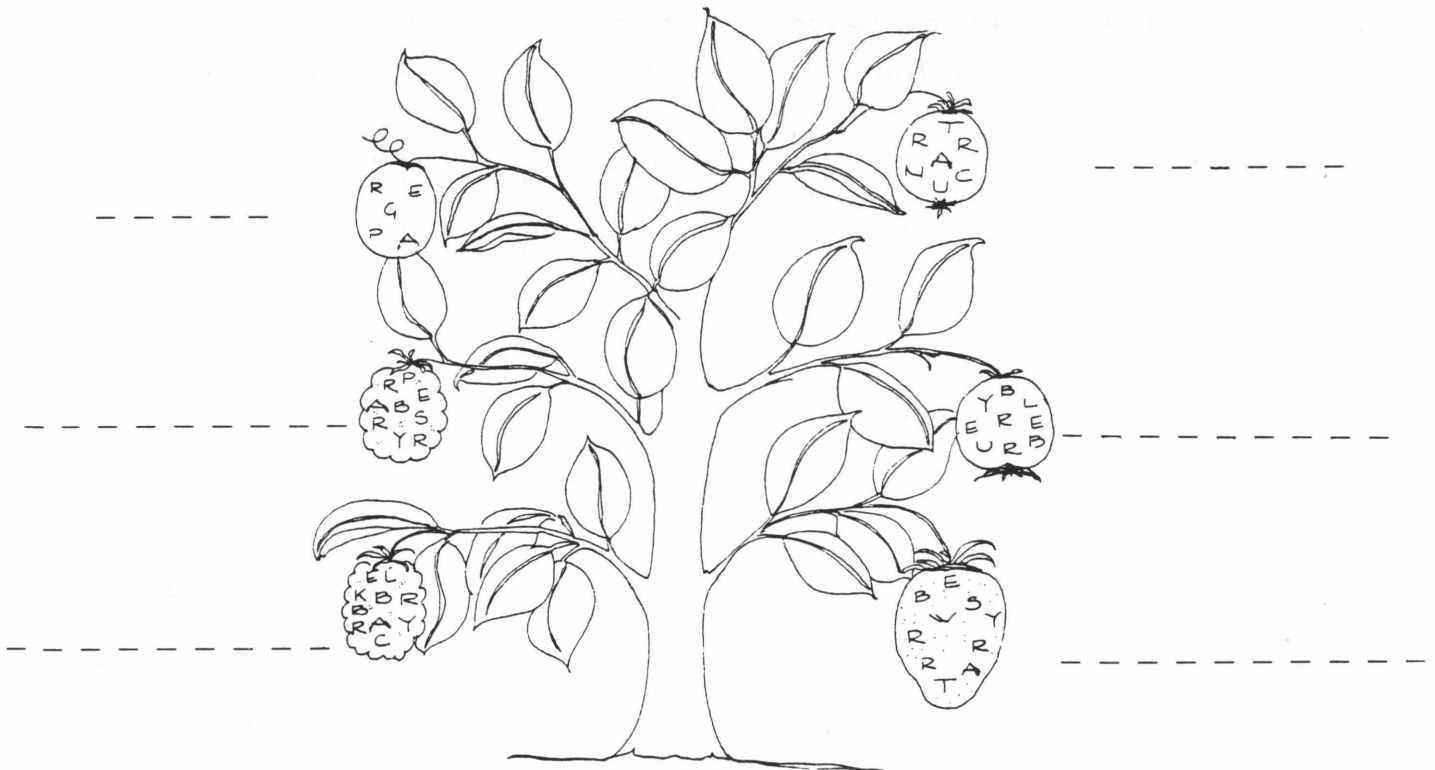
1. Make two 3½" holes about an inch above the bottom of the jug on opposite sides.



2. Glue the pie plate to the bottom so birds can stand on it while eating. Make sure you use strong glue.
3. Follow instruction #3 above to finish your feeder.

Game - The Fruit Cake Bush

This nutty bush is bearing fruit, but who knows what kinds? Unscramble the letters in each of the six fruits to find out.



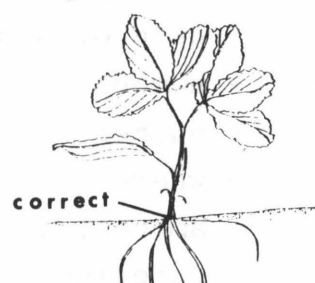
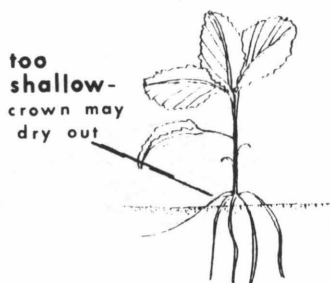
Project - Small Fruits



You'll need: containers
 container soil mix (from "Seeds, Soils, Supplies"
 HELP sheet)
 drainage material (gravel, stones, etc.)
 strawberry plants
 fertilizer



1. Plan to plant at least one large or three small containers of strawberries. You can use hanging baskets, cheese boxes (from a grocery store or delicatessen), a sturdy wooden box, or a wide peck or bushel basket; large plastic or clay pots can also be used. See "Recycling" HELP sheet for more ideas. (If someone in your home grows house plants, there may be a strawberry jar around, but these are usually too small for regular strawberries. Alpine strawberries, which have small, sweet berries, do well in strawberry jars. See Extra Projects.)
2. Your plants may be bought at a local nursery or garden shop in the spring, or you can order them by mail, but either way, they should be planted as soon as possible after they arrive. Keep them according to the packers' instructions if you can't plant right away. Have your containers and soil mix ready when the plants arrive. (Note: Stay away from "climbing" strawberries. They don't usually do what the ads claim.)
3. Put about $\frac{1}{2}$ "-1" of drainage material (gravel, stones, or chips of clay pots that have broken) in the bottom of your container. Fill the container about $\frac{2}{3}$ full of soil mix. Strawberries are very picky about the way they are planted. Look at one of your plants. The point where the roots join the leaf stems is called the *crown*. The crown must be planted just at the soil line, not above or below it. See "Transplanting" HELP sheet.



A good way to plant is to dig a hole and build a mound of soil in the hole so the plant resting on top of the mound will have its crown right at the soil line. Spread the roots over the mound ...



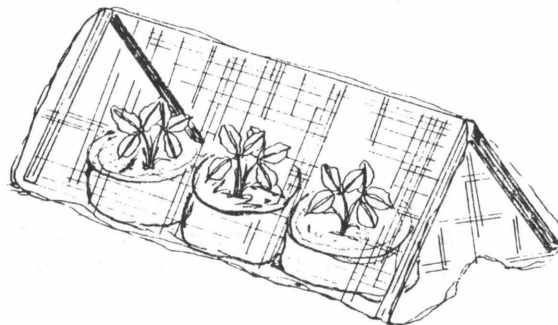
... and fill in the rest of the hole with soil.

Plants should be 6-8" apart or in separate small containers.

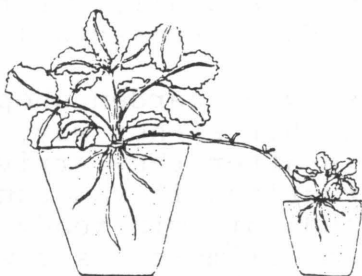


4. Water thoroughly. Instructions for fertilizing and continued watering may be found in the HELP sheets. It is easy to over-water strawberries, especially when they are first planted, so make sure the soil is fairly (but not completely) dry before watering again.

5. When your berries start to turn red you may need something to protect them from birds. Cheesecloth or old, washed nylon stockings cut open and fastened securely over plants will let sunshine in and keep birds out. Aluminum pie pans or trays hung nearby so they bang together in the wind will help scare birds.



6.



Your plants may produce runners after they make berries. You can start new plants by putting another container next to the first one and stake the baby plant down gently in the new pot with small sticks. When the new plant takes root, cut off the runner stem and care for the plant just like your originals.

Record - keeping

Keep the following records of how your strawberry project goes on a clean sheet of notebook paper or in a small notebook:

- where you got your plants from? when?
- date plants arrived or were purchased
- date of planting
- number and type of containers
- number of plants per container
- where the plants were grown
- amount, type, how often was fertilizer used?
- watering schedule
- dates of first and last harvest
- pints of berries harvested
- did you like the taste?
- problems and what you did about them
- comments or suggestions for next year



Extra projects

There are some other projects you can do: (1) Outdoor Strawberries, (2) Alpine Strawberries, (3) Other Small Fruits, (4) Strawberry Terrace or Pyramid. See your leader for details.