

SOIL TEST INFORMATION SHEET NO. F-530

Prepared by Extension Fruit and Nut Specialist Dr. Michael Polozola

Strawberries (Homeowners)

1. Strawberry plants grow best in soils with a pH between 5.8 and 6.2.
2. Before planting: mix 1 to 1.5 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet into the top 6 inches of soil. If available, incorporate compost or aged manure to improve soil health.
3. Early Spring (Growth Resumes): apply ½ pound of 10-10-10 per 100 square feet around the plants (avoid direct contact with crowns). Water thoroughly after fertilizing.
4. After First Harvest (Optional Boost): if plants appear pale or weak, apply a light feeding of nitrogen:
 - Option 1: ¼ pound of ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) per 100 square feet
 - Option 2: ¼ pound of calcium nitrate (15.5-0-0) per 100 square feet (also supplies calcium, which supports fruit quality and reduces issues like tip burn).
 - Water thoroughly after application. Avoid over-fertilizing, which can reduce fruit quality and increase disease risk.
5. Organic Fertilizer Options: use composted poultry manure, fish emulsion, or organic blends labeled for fruiting plants. Apply every 4–6 weeks during active growth, following label directions.
6. Common Mistakes to Avoid:
 - Over-fertilizing (especially with nitrogen).
 - Fertilizing too late in the season.
 - Getting fertilizer on leaves or crowns.
7. Strawberries grown in containers or raised beds with soilless media (peat, coir, perlite mixes) have different nutrient needs:
 - Use a slow-release fertilizer or a liquid feed every 2–3 weeks.
 - Choose a product labeled for fruits or vegetables (e.g., 10-10-10 or 5-10-10).
 - Monitor for signs of nutrient deficiency (yellowing leaves, poor growth).
8. Container mixes should be tested using a soilless media test, not a standard soil test.
9. Contact your county agent for additional information and help in your fertilization program. The agent also receives a copy of this report for the parish office files.

Strawberries (Commercial Fields)

1. Strawberry plants grow best in soils with a pH between 5.8 and 6.2.
2. Preplant Fertilization: apply phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) based on soil test levels. Incorporate into the bed before laying plastic mulch.
3. Nitrogen management: total seasonal requirement of 100 to 200 pounds per acre.
 - Apply in split applications:
 - 30–40 lb/acre preplant
 - Remaining N through fertigation or side-dress in 4–6 applications, starting 4–6 weeks after transplanting.
4. Foliar Tissue Testing: begin sampling 4–6 weeks after transplanting, then every 2–4 weeks.
 - Collect the most recently mature trifoliate leaves from multiple plants.
 - Compare results to LSU or Southern regional sufficiency ranges.
 - Adjust fertigation or foliar feeding based on deficiencies (especially nitrogen, potassium, calcium and boron).
5. Micronutrients:
 - Apply boron, magnesium, or calcium only if soil or tissue tests indicate a deficiency.
 - Foliar applications may be used for quick correction.
6. Contact your county agent for additional information and help in your fertilization program. The agent also receives a copy of this report for the parish office files.