

Strawberry Demonstration

Cynthia Haynes, associate professor
Department of Horticulture
David Rueber, farm superintendent

Introduction

Strawberries are one of the most popular small fruits grown in the home garden. Several new cultivars are being marketed in recent years. In 2006, some of these new strawberry cultivars and some older cultivars were planted at ISU Research Farms. The objective was to compare a few new cultivars with well-known ones.

Materials and Methods

Plants were planted at the farms by mid-May 2006. Approximately 8 to 10 plants of each cultivar were planted 1.5 ft apart in 15 ft rows with 5 ft between rows. Plants were watered at planting and as needed throughout the growing seasons. In 2006, all flowers were removed to allow plants to establish. Plants were covered with straw each winter and the straw was removed in the spring. All berries were picked in 2007. In 2008, harvesting of a cultivar was stopped when the average size of berries being picked that day fell below

4 grams. Total weight, total number of berries, and average size of berries were recorded. After all fruit was harvested in 2007, plantings were renovated, fertilized, and watered as recommended in "Growing Strawberries at Home" (Pm 717 from ISU Extension).

Results and Discussion

A comparison of total yield, berry number, and average berry size at the Northern Research Farm is shown in Table 1. Based on observations, all plants established quickly. Even after renovation, all cultivars formed new plants and filled their rows. Sparkle was the first to form new plants to fill the row. Ovation was the slowest to fill the row and had the poorest survival rate by the spring of 2008.

All strawberry cultivars were productive in 2007 with the top performers being Itasca, Honeoye, and Cavendish. The top performers in 2008 were Cavendish, Itasca, and Jewel. After only four pickings in 2008, Sparkle berries fell below the minimum size, which resulted in a low total yield. Cabot had the largest king berries in both 2007 and 2008.

Table 1. Comparison of total yield, berry number, and average berry size of 10 strawberry cultivars grown at the Northern Research Farm.

Cultivar	2007			2008			
	Total wt (lb)	Berry no.	Avg berry (gram)	Total wt (lb)	Berry no.	Total harvest	First picking
Allstar	11.2	854	5.9	36.9	1828	9.2	18.5
Cabot	13.1	452	13.1	32.8	975	15.3	28.4
Cavendish	33.9	1733	8.9	50.3	2045	11.2	21.3
Clancy	20.3	1074	8.6	26.1	1303	9.1	11.3
Honeoye	27.1	2004	6.1	30.6	2114	6.3	13.4
Itasca	31.3	2262	6.3	45.6	3364	6.2	12.9
Jewel	21.6	1507	6.5	43.5	2526	7.8	18.2
L'Amour	16.1	887	8.2	33.0	1517	9.9	16.5
Sparkle	25.2	2870	4.0	9.6	614	7.1	8.0
Ovation	12.9	663	8.9	10.2	799	5.8	18.9