

Fragaria virginiana

Wild Strawberry

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Most cultivated strawberries inherit their sweet flavor from parent plant Wild Strawberry, a lovely, cool-season ground cover, native to much of North America.* Though its showy flowers reliably bloom each spring, fruit development depends on environmental conditions. When it does fruit, be prepared to compete with wildlife for the chance to consume it.



| Ground Cover | Clump of Flowers/Foliage, Unripe Fruit, Colony |
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| Height: ¼–½ foot | |
| Spread: 1–2 feet | |
| Bloom Color: White | |
| Characteristics | |
| Clumping herbaceous perennial ; gynodioecious | |
| Alternate , obovate , coarsely-toothed, trifoliate , blue-green, basal leaves on slender pubescent petiole | |
| Inflorescence of 1–10 flowers with 5 white petals , 5 persistent green sepals , & yellow stamens/pistils subtended by 5 foliaceous bracts April–May, followed by sweet, ½-inch red fruit** (etaerios of achenes) | |
| Hairy stolons may grow up to 2' from crown, rooting at nodes & spreading indefinitely to form colonies | |
| Attributes | |
| Tolerates drought; susceptible to numerous pests and foliar, root, and fruit diseases; deer-resistant | |
| In summer after fruit set, growth may slow or plant may go dormant; winter hardy | |
| Fruit edible raw; steep leaves in boiling water for tea | |
| Attracts bees, butterflies to flowers; birds, mammals & turtles to fruit; larval host to ~73 lepidopterans | |
| Growing and Maintenance Tips | Excellent Replacement for |
| Soil Requirements : Well-drained; prefers sandy loam | Ficaria verna - Lesser Celandine |
| Light Requirements : Sun to Partial Shade | Galium odoratum - Sweet Woodruff |
| Water Requirements : Moist | Lysimachia nummularia - Creeping Jenny |
| Needs adequate sunlight to flower & water to fruit; site away from summer heat and drying winds | Potentilla indica - Indian-strawberry |
| Thin out plants every 3–4 years; mulch before winter*** | Vinca minor - Periwinkle |
| Use in pots, pollinator and woodland gardens, as lawn alternative, and for erosion control on slopes | *It is native to DC, present throughout MD and PA, and common throughout DE and VA. **Cage or net to protect fruit you wish to consume. ***Mulch with straw in areas with extended freezing. |
| Hardiness : USDA Zones 5a–9b | |

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Mary Free and Elaine Mills (fruit), Small Space Garden