

small organic farmer makes it big in strawberries

Serena Wyatt, a small organic farmer in San Marcos, CA, has put together the perfect program for growing perfect strawberries.

How Does She Do It?

On raised beds supplemented with compost and black plastic mulch to reduce botrytis infestation and soil evaporation, Serena transplants *Camarosa* seedling strawberry plants, and then injects through the drip tape, Organic BioLink® Soil Fertilizer, a micronutrient fertilizer containing proprietary growth enhancement technology. About two weeks after transplanting, she injects through the drip system, Organic BioLink® Cal Plus, a 6% organic calcium, and Organic TRIGGRR®, an organic seaweed-based, growth enhancer. She repeats this Calcium-TRIGGRR® combination about every twenty-one days alternating it with applications of Organic BioLink® Soil Fertilizer when needed.

Any special techniques?

Healthy soil is key she says. "Healthy soil for healthy plants." Serena supplements her soil with her living pile of compost and a microbial nutrient product to enhance the natural microbial ecosystem in the soil.

She tests her soil and leaf tissue on a regular basis to determine nutrient needs. Depending upon the deficiencies identified by the soil and tissue tests, Serena uses Organic BioLink® 5-5-5 Fertilizer, a liquid N-P-K formulated for the drip system, and Organic BioLink® Soil Fertilizer as needed throughout the growing season. "I spoon-feed my plants; consistent fertilization is important", says Serena.



Calcium is also key to perfect strawberries. "I'm a big believer in calcium", she declares. "Lots of plants lack it and it needs to be available. If the soil pH is too high the calcium turns to lime; high phosphate in the soil will bind the calcium making it unavailable". Calcium helps build tissues in the cell wall. Serena has noted through years of organic farming that calcium will improve storagability of the strawberries, and increase fruit density and skin strength. Calcium will also enhance the activity of natural plant hormones.

Serena also uses a spun polyester blanket to cover her strawberry rows to protect from feeding birds, insect swarms, sunburn and weather stress. Says Serena, "The row cover is a season extender, offering 2^o frost protection, wind and drying heat protection. It's like a green house effect".

What about insect infestations?

Serena walks among her plants everyday, scouting for potential problems. "I like to find out what is causing the problem and fix it rather than kill it," she states emphatically. She uses a garlic-based insect repellent to control soft-bodied insects, worms and moths as well as beneficial-predator insects. Serena also uses cayenne pepper and diatomaceous earth to repel ants.

Want more information?

For more information about Organic BioLink® Soil Fertilizer, 5-5-5 Fertilizer and Cal Plus, Organic BioLink® Insect Repellent or Organic TRIGGRR® contact Westbridge Agricultural Products at (800) 876-2767 or visit our web site at www.westbridge.com.