

2004-2005 Strawberry Plasticulture Date of Planting Study

Brad R. Bergefurd, Thomas Harker, Dr. Shawn Wright

The Ohio State University South Centers

1864 Shyville Road, Piketon, Ohio 45661-9749

Phone: (740) 289-3727

METHODS:

All strawberry tips were obtained from Strawberry Hill Inc., Bunn NC. All strawberry tips were planted in 50 cell trays containing Metro Mix 360 soilless media and placed in the greenhouse at Southern State Community College during the month of August. Tips were grown for four weeks with an average day temperature of 75° F and an average night temperature of 65° F. Planting media was kept continually moist with a mist system to promote root development. The resulting plugs were transplanted to the field using a three-point hitch water wheel planter and watered in with Peters 20-20-20 starter fertilizer. Field preparation included pre-plant application of 60 units each of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, plowing, disking. A raised bed was formed with a Redick Fumigation bed shaper and covered with black plastic mulch. Trickle irrigation tape was installed under the mulch. Strawberry plants were planted in double rows with 12 inches between plants and rows and planted on 9/10, 9/15, 9/24 and 10/1. 1.5 oz. floating row cover was put in place on November 5th over all treatments. The plant growth was monitored throughout the winter. To control weed growth between rows, annual rye grass was seeded prior to berry planting. A standard commercial fungicide program was followed to control disease.

RESULTS:

There was no significant difference between dates of planting this year. The average fruit weight across treatments was 0.5 oz. Many of the treatments were fed on heavily by mice over the winter months. Early in the season deer also fed on many of the plants.

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