THE CULTIVATION OF STRAWBERRY IN JAPAN

MASAAKI TAKEI

SAFE VEGETABLE PROMOTION PROJECT IN BENGUET
The Cultivation of Strawberry in Japan

Masaaki TAKEI
FOREWORD

Toward Year-Round Production of Safe Strawberries

In Japan, consumers purchase sweet and tasty strawberries all the year round. Berries are eaten both fresh and as processed products. Strawberry cakes and many other types of sweets are popular among young ladies and children. In the Philippines, strawberry jam and wines are marketed. But we can create additional demand for berries by producing sweets using them.

Presently in the Philippines, only winter-type strawberries are planted. We can create new all season varieties which fit growing conditions in Benguet and let the farmers grow berries all the year round.

Benguet farmers depend heavily on chemicals. But, we can grow safe and tasty strawberries to be eaten fresh by using plastic house protection.

Expanded demand for processing, all-the-year supplies and safe and tasty berries will, I am sure, contribute to larger income to Benguet farmers.

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MASAAKI TAKEI
Farm Extension Officer, Nagano Prefecture, Japan
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Introduction

Japanese People love strawberries. There are lots of strawberry products in Japan.

Strawberry shortcakes

Strawberry wedding cakes
Japanese are consuming strawberry not only fresh, but also as strawberry products such as cakes and sweets.
Chapter 1

ALL SEASON VARIETIES

Usually Japanese farmers are producing strawberries from November to May. Most strawberry varieties in Japan are WINTER TYPE varieties. Hence, Japan imports strawberries in the off-season (May to November).

However, breeders, both private and public, are developing new varieties, and then the production of all-season type strawberries is increasing.

If they use all-season type strawberries, they can harvest them from June to November. During this period, the price of the strawberry is higher. The reason is limited supply. It is off-season for normal one-season or winter type varieties.

How do you develop strawberry varieties? It is through “Cross-Breeding” or “Cross-Pollination”.

Of all seeds produced by pollination, 50% are all-season type. Then, they select the plants with desired color, sugar content, sarcocarp, fragrance, size, etc.

It is easy to do cross-pollination, but it is very rare to find a new variety
you want. You must be patient to find one. In Japan, they usually say that they can find a new variety which they want from among 10,000 to 100,000 hybrid plants.

Nagano prefecture is developing new strawberry varieties which have all season characteristics. Let us see major ones
Summer Princess

(Aug~Nov)
Color: light red
Sugar content: 8.28
Sarcocarp: Soft
Fragrance: Strong
Size: a little small

Summer Engel

(Aug~Nov)
Color: dark red
Sugar content: 7.68
Sarcocarp: Soft
Fragrance: Average
Size: small
8-9

(Flamenco)  
(Aug~Nov)  
Color: light red  
Sugar content: 6.52  
Sarcocarp: hard  
Fragrance: weak  
Size: a little big  

(Flamenco)  
(Aug~Nov)  
Color: dark red  
Sugar content: 9.88  
Sarcocarp: hard  
Fragrance: Strong  
Size: a little big
Color inside fruits of different varieties

Flamenco 8-9 Summer Princess Summer Angel
Chapter 2
CULTIVATION

Section 1: Planting Beds

Strawberry production in Japan is mostly done in green houses. It is because they need to control the temperature, water and other conditions to produce higher quality strawberries.

Steel frame greenhouse  Pipe greenhouse

Nowadays, strawberry production on elevated bench is getting popular among strawberry farmers.

They use several materials like coco-peat as soil /media to fill cultivation benches.
They provide fertilizers through drip irrigation.

- A plastic water hose
- Liquid chemical fertilizer tanks (two)
- Mixing machine, Control unit
- Water tank

Some advanced farmers use computerized machines to mix fertilizer.
Section 2: Nursing Seedlings

Ground Nursery

Planting time of strawberry seedlings in the open field is end of May to middle of June.
In Nagano Prefecture, farmers produce young seedlings in pots for the next year. Runners are planted into pots at the end of August to middle of September, which is close to the end of harvest season.
Section 3: Plant Care in Early Stage

Planting seedlings on beds

Nagano strawberry farmers plant strawberry to beds in March. Then Strawberry grows look like this picture at the end of April.

End of April

Potted plant seedlings are faster to grow than plants from ground nursery.
Beginning of May

In the first week of May, strawberry grows like this picture.

EC of irrigation water is controlled, depending upon growing stage of strawberry, as follows:

<table>
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<th>Stage</th>
<th>EC</th>
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<tr>
<td>After bloom</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After fruition</td>
<td>0.3~0.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Temperature inside green house:</td>
<td>&lt; 30°C</td>
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</table>
Leaves, Runners, Blossoms are removed

(Until 40 days after planting)

Farmers keep strawberry plants growing. Until 40 days after planting, strawberry leaves, runners and flowers are removed. Its purpose is to make strawberry grow bigger. Nutrients are supposed to be used for strawberry plant growth only, not for runners and flowers.

Why do we remove old leaves? Old leaves are less efficient in photosynthesis. They also may be infested with insects/diseases.
Middle of May

• Height: 15~20 cm (not over 30 cm)

• 40 days after planting, blossoms come out.

40 days after transplanting, strawberry plants are 15-20 cm tall in good condition. From that time on, we start letting runners grow and flowers produce fruits.
3 sprouts remain

(When additional sprouts come out, cut them off)

We keep only 3 sprouts on 1 plant. If you find more sprouts, it should be removed.

Planting additional runners to bed

(End of May)

• Plant space 25cm

• The middle 12.5cm plant a runner.

• Harvest starts in September.

At the end of May, you can find growing runners. The runners are planted in between strawberry plants.
At the beginning of June, strawberry plants are supposed to be 20cm tall. Not taller than that!

If you notice your strawberry plants are big, it means that nitrogen content is high in plants. You will then find leaves robust. But the plant will not bear fruits much.

**Removing young berries**

- **First blossom**
  - 5-6 fruits per stem
- **Following blossoms**
  - 3-4 fruits per stem
- **Too many fruits**
  - Weaken plants & reduce no of fruits.

During this period, strawberry produces many flowers. But you should remove some young berries. If the plant bears lots of fruits, it will be weak later; then produces less fruits. It ends up in decreased yield in whole season.
Section 4: Fruit Bearing Period

First fruits (End of June)

Strawberry fruits start ripening at the end of June, which farmers start harvesting.
High temperature period *(August)*

- Strawberry plant grows well under low temperature. (15~25°C)
- Daytime < 30°C.
- Night < 20°C
- Height < 25cm
- Big blossoms come out.

Strawberry prefers low temperature, requires (15-20°C). If temperature is high (over 30 degrees celsius), pollens may die.
Pick excess young berries & leaves (*June ~ October*)

The strawberry produces fruits from June to October. During this time, you need to limit the number of young berries and leaves (thinning). By doing so, you will produce more and harvest time lasts longer.
Low temperature period (October) Bear fruit

- Pick young berries=7～8.
- Under low temperature, large fruits appear.

During the month of October, temperature is going down. In this period, you can harvest large fruits.
Strawberries are harvested every day. After harvesting, strawberry fruits are packed. Japanese strawberry variety is soft type. So we must be careful to handle fruits.
Some strawberry fruits are deformed. It is caused by non-pollination.

High temperature kills pollens.

Wind, honey bees, and even flies carry pollen and help pollination.

If the supply of nitrogen is excessive, it will cause the green pigment in the bottom of the fruit.
If the soil is too wet, strawberry roots will be rotten.
Shortage of water

If the supply of water is not enough for strawberry plants, certain symptoms appear. Edge of leaves become red-brown, or coloring of the leaves turns light green.
Pick excessive young berries

During harvesting time, you should remove excessive young fruits to keep harvest period longer. If the plant bears too many fruits at once, the plant transfer its nutrition to fruits. And the plant itself gets weaker and weaker.
Overproduction (*Plants become weak*)

- Leaves turn red.
- Leaves droop because of aging.
- New leaves do not come out.
- New blossoms are small.

If the plant bears much fruits, especially strawberries, it gets tired, and then shows the following reactions:
- Leaves turn red.
- Leaves droop because of aging.
- New leaves do not come out.
- New flowers are small.
Harvest from good cultivation

Above graphs show the differences of monthly yields between good and bad cultivation.

Good cultivation means that farmer maintains proper number of fruit on plant, and also proper leaves and runners.
※ Year 2008 (good)
House space = 17a
Count = 12,000 seedlings
Planting distance = 25cm
Harvest = 20,803 packs/300g
Harvest from 1 plant = 520.1g

※ Year 2007 (bad)
House space = 17a
Count = 12,000 seedlings
Planting distance = 25cm
Harvest = 16,181 packs/300g
Harvest from 1 plant = 404.5g
Chapter 3

Protection from Insects and Diseases

Directions for chemical use

● **Bactericides**
  Pre-harvest: long effect
  - For example: copper oxychloride, polyoxins,
    sodium bicarbonate.
  During harvest: 1 day before harvesting
  - For example: boscalid, iminoctadine

● **Insecticides**
  Thrips and Spider Mite: regular intervals 15 days

⛔️ **Do not use the following: affect honey bees**
  - For example: fenitrothion, trichlorfon, dichlorvos,
    malathion, diazinon, permethrin.
  fenvalerate, methomyl
Gray mold

Cause: high humidity
Cure: fresh air into greenhouse & cut off old leaves

Gray mold prevention

1. ininoctadine
2. fludioxonil
3. fenhexamid
4. boscalid

During harvest
Powdery mildew

Cause: dry
Cure: cut off affected laves.

Powdery mildew prevention 1

1. copper oxychloride
2. sodium bicarbonate
3. polyoxins
4. methylquinoxaline
Powdery mildew prevention

1. Kresoxim-methyl
2. Mepanipyrim
3. Iminoctadine
4. Simeconazole
5. Myclobutanil

Harvest period
Verticillium wilt

Cause: Soil-borne infection.
Cure: disinfect soil with chloropicrin

Phytophthora rot

Causes: continuous rainy days, soil-borne infection.
Cure: disinfest soil with chloropicrin
Aphids

Carry Viruses

Chemicals used: pymetrozine, flonicamid, thiacloprid, nitenpyram, imidacloprid, acetamiprid

Virus

- Plant loses strength.
- Harvest is reduced.
Greenhouse whitefly

Chemicals:
acetamiprid, thiacloprid, pymetrozine

Thrips

Chemicals:
spinosad, lufenuron, flufenoxuron, acetamiprid
Spider Mites

Average length: 0.5～0.7mm
egg～adult: 10days.

Spider Mite prevention

① **milbemectin**… end of March-in early-April
② **emamectin**… end of April
③ **chlorfenapyr**… end of May
④ **cyflumetofen**… end of June
⑤ **acequinocyl**… end of July
⑥ **bifenazate**… mid-August
⑦ **fenbutatin oxide+etoxazole**… early-Sep.
⑧ **milbemectin**… end of Sep.
Tarsonemid mites

Average length: 0.3mm
egg~adult: 7 days
Chemicals used:
    same as Spider Mite

Nematode

Average length: 0.7～0.9mm
Chemicals: carbosulfan, fosthiazate
Hornet

Use strawberry juice to attract/capture hornets
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