

'Florida Beauty' Strawberry (PPAF)

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Summary

'Florida Beauty' is a new strawberry cultivar with compact plant and weak day-neutral tendencies, making it ideal for early planting in central Florida. Its fruit have excellent flavor and shape. It does not produce elongated fruit early in the season like that of 'Florida Radiance'.

Characteristics

'Florida Beauty' is a new strawberry cultivar, commercially available for the first time during the 2017-18 Florida strawberry season. It is notable for its compact plant habit, low chill requirement and weak day-neutral tendencies. This combination of traits makes it ideal for the early planting window in Florida, approximately Sept 20 – Oct 1. When planted during this period, fruit harvest will begin in mid-November and continue steadily thereafter.



Figure 1. Plants and fruit of 'Florida Beauty'.

This cultivar has excellent fruit quality, with flavor rated similar to Sweet Sensation® 'Florida127' and has sufficient quality to be retail marketed under the Sweet Sensation® brand. The fruit also have excellent shape, excellent rain tolerance, and even medium-red color. Fruit size is slightly smaller than 'Florida Radiance' on average, most noticeably at the tail end of the first hand (inflorescence) of fruit. However, size recovers after this period and remains consistently medium-sized until the end of the season. The fruit never become overly elongated like that of 'Florida Radiance' early in the season.

Disease resistance

'Florida Beauty' has a similar disease resistance profile to 'Florida Radiance' except that it is more resistant to root rot caused by *Phytophthora cactorum* and may be more susceptible to crown rot caused by *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*. Because of the stress caused by early planting and very early fruit loads, this variety may benefit from planting on well-drained and less-humid sites which may have less inoculum of *Colletotrichum* and *Macrophomina* fungi.

Management recommendations

For disease management, nurserymen and fruit growers are recommended to make regular applications of Captan throughout the growing season. Switch should be held back as a tool for disease management during peak bloom periods when weather conditions are favorable for Botrytis. Due to its slightly greater susceptibility to powdery mildew, 'Florida Beauty' should be carefully monitored for signs and symptoms of this disease.

Table 1. Disease resistance profile of ‘Florida Beauty’ compared to ‘Florida Radiance’ (R = resistant, MR = moderately resistant, MS = moderately susceptible, S = susceptible).

Disease	FL Radiance	FL Beauty
Anthracnose fruit rot	R	MS
Angular leaf spot	MS	MS
Botrytis fruit rot	MS	MS
Charcoal rot	MR	MS
Colletotrichum crown rot	MS	S
Phytophthora root rot	S	MR
Powdery mildew	MR	MS

Growers are encouraged to plant ‘Florida Beauty’ between Sept 20 and Oct 5. Later plantings are not recommended as the plant is compact and may remain too small to yield similarly to ‘Florida Radiance’ at late planting dates. A few days after overhead irrigation for establishment is concluded, it may be advisable to trim blooms and fruit. These blooms have a higher chance of producing unmarketable fruit, and trimming can help increase fruit size later on and may reduce plant stress.

‘Florida Beauty’ has performed well in trials using fertilization programs developed for ‘Florida Radiance’. However, because of the potential for high fruit loads in mid- and late-season resulting from early planting dates, more mid-season nitrogen fertilization might be required for ‘Florida Beauty’ than for ‘Florida Radiance’ to maximize yield and quality.

Stock availability

Plants are available from licensed nurseries beginning during the 2017-18 season. Clean stock has been distributed to all nurseries supplying Florida growers on an equitable basis.

Summary

‘Florida Beauty’ is a strawberry variety highly adapted to early planting dates in central Florida, bred to maximize Nov and Dec yields of high-quality fruit. Growers should prioritize management of Colletotrichum fungi and powdery mildew diseases. Growers should also consider choosing well-drained

sites and should consider trimming the first branched hands of flowers and fruit after establishment.

Contact

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