

That's the berries



“The strawberry grows underneath the Nettle, and wholesome berries thrive and ripen best Neighbour'd by fruit of lesser quality.”

Henry V William Shakespeare

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trawberries are thought to have been cultivated in ancient Rome. That's no big deal since the nasty, naughty, uppity Romans got around a lot and probably tried their hand at all sorts of things as they conquered most of the then known world. Needless to say, the strawberry is considered one of the most important small fruits grown in the Western Hemisphere. It grows as a wild plant and as a cultivated plant.



The strawberry is a small plant of the Rosaceae (Rose) family. All varieties of the strawberry plant belong to the *Fragaria* genus. The berries seem to be *strewn* among the leaves of the plant. The plant first had the name *strewberry*, which later was changed to strawberry. Would that people be like a strawberry—that rare plant with white flowers for honor, red fruit for courage, and green leaves for constancy.

The *everbearing* variety of strawberries is fruitful and productive, yielding berries throughout summer and fall. The delicate heart-shaped berry has always connoted purity, passion, and healing. The strawberry is recognized as representing absolute perfection in the Victorian language of flowers.

Speaking strawberry

Whether you call it **Luleshtrydhe** (Albanian); **Jahoda** (Czech); **Wazusteca** (Dakota); **Truskawka** (Polish); **Jordgubbe** (Swedish); or **Isitrobheli** (Zulu), the strawberry is loved worldwide. In provincial France, strawberries were regarded as an aphrodisiac, and traditionally, newlyweds were served a soup of thinned sour cream, strawberries, borage (an herb similar to cucumber), and powdered sugar. Hey, it's worth a try. A less exotic aside: A serving of eight strawberries a day will provide 140 percent of the recommended daily intake of Vitamin C for kids. The strawberry is also a good source of folic acid, potassium, and fiber, and a one cup serving is only 55 calories—provided you don't douse your berries in sweet or whipping cream.



Strawberry Fields Forever

Strawberry Fields (Lennon, McCartney) has been voted best song of all times. Not very far from Penny Lane, Strawberry Field (singular) was on the Beaconsfield Road in Woolton (near Liverpool). This was the actual name of a Salvation Army Orphanage, and in its surrounding woods and gardens the daydreamer John Lennon used to play. Nothing remains of the property but a gate and fence. But that's *nothing to get hung about*. *Strawberry Fields forever*.

Strawberries show up in frappes, flans, fools, puree, crepes, jams, shortcake, pies, chocolate dip, red wine, lemonade, slushes, shakes, smoothies, smash, sweet cream, and Balsamic vinegar(!) Or how 'bout this?

Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.

William Butler (1535-1618)



Butler the poet was lauding the heart-shaped strawberry. You might say that God looked at what he had made and said that it was *berry good*. The goodness of strawberries is apparent in art, for to symbolize perfection and righteousness, medieval stone masons carved strawberry designs on altars and around the tops of pillars in churches and cathedrals.



But even the strawberry is the target of root-feeding pests like the crown borer, the strawberry root weevil, rootworm, white grubs, and other menaces such as two-spotted spider mites, strawberry sawflies, clippers, tarnished plant bugs, sap beetles, and slugs. Botrytis rot and red stele fungus are two serious rot disease facing strawberry production.

Is this not like us?

Doubtless God could have made a better Adam and Eve, but doubtless God never did. Like our original parents, when it comes to being berry good, we all come up short; we're all in a jam. Instead of a root weevil, we have a root of evil, and it's the rot disease called S-I-N. That is why God sent his best, the Jewish Messiah Jesus, to this earth to take care of our serious rot, and pull us out of this jam called sin, death, and hell. Jesus died and three days later emerged from the ground victorious. He promises a sweet forever—heaven—to all who trust in him.

Doubtless this is berry good!