

# Pre-School Pages



A newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers  
 packed with food, facts & fun  
 from your local county extension office

Cooperative Extension Service

Marshall County  
 1933 Mayfield Hwy.  
 Benton, KY 42025  
 (270) 527-3285

Fax: (270) 527-1555  
 extension.ca.uky.edu

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## Celebrate: National Strawberry Month



Strawberries have a history that goes back more than 2,000 years. They are indigenous to both the northern and southern hemispheres. Strawberries grew wild in Italy where the first mention of strawberries occurred in the writings of Cato, a Roman Senator. European explorers discovered strawberries in North America in 1588 when they landed on the shores of the state of Virginia. The explorers found tiny, sweet, deep red, wild strawberries. Early settlers in Massachusetts enjoyed eating strawberries grown by local American Indians who cultivated them as early as 1643. The first "refrigerated" shipping across the United States occurred in 1843 when innovative growers in Cincinnati, Ohio spread ice on top of the strawberry boxes and sent them by train. By the middle of the 1800s, many regions were cultivating strawberries. Strawberries have been grown in California since the early 1900s.

For more information, visit:

[www.ba.ars.usda.gov/fruit/services/strawhist.html](http://www.ba.ars.usda.gov/fruit/services/strawhist.html)

Source: [https://fcs-](https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/commodity/strawberries)

[hes.ca.uky.edu/commodity/strawberries](https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/commodity/strawberries)

## Let's Eat Fresh Fruit Salad



- 1 Pint Strawberries
- 1 Pineapple
- 2 Apples
- 2 Bananas
- 2 Cups whole, seedless green grapes
- 2 Cups whole, seedless purple grapes

1. Slice strawberries, and add to a large serving bowl
2. Peel and core pineapple; cut into chunks and add a bowl.
3. Core apples, cut into large, diced pieces, and add to bowl.
4. Slice bananas crosswise and add to bowl.
5. Add in green grapes and purple grapes.
6. Stir to mix salad

Serves 12, Serving Size 1 Cup, Calories per serving 140.

Source: [https://kynep.ca.uky.edu/system/files/rfl-recipes-booklet\\_2020\\_singlepages.pdf](https://kynep.ca.uky.edu/system/files/rfl-recipes-booklet_2020_singlepages.pdf)



# Play Time

## Plant a Strawberry Jar

The children plant strawberry starts in a container and find out what these small plants need to grow and produce strawberries.

### Materials Needed

- A strawberry jar (urn-shaped container with openings or pockets on sides) or
- A container at least 8" deep and 8-10" in diameter
- Ever-bearing strawberry starts (small plants)
- Potting soil
- Garden hose with sprinkler nozzle or watering can

### What To Do Ahead of Time

- Check local nurseries for varieties of ever-bearing strawberries suited to your growing zone.
- Assemble the pot, potting soil, and water source outside.
- Determine the best spot to place the pot; large pots filled with soil and plants are heavy to move.
- Plan to serve strawberries in some form at snack or mealtime

### For Strawberry Jar:

- Layer potting soil level to the first openings of the jar. Gently remove the plants from their pots and ease through the pocket opening. Spread the roots with care and cover them with soil. Water is enough to moisten the soil but not drench. Continue, ending with 3 starts planted in the top center of the pot. Water the plants.

### For a container:

- Fill the container 2 /3 full of potting soil. Remove the start from its pot and gently loosen the roots. Place the start in the center of a single container or 8 inches apart in larger

containers. Cover with soil and water to moisten but not drench.

**Planting Option:** If space allows, plant strawberry starts in a sunny garden spot.

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/growit\\_book7.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/growit_book7.pdf)

## Life Savers

### Food Safety when Handling Strawberries

#### Selection:

Choose fully ripened, bright red berries. Strawberries do not ripen after they have been picked. Berries should be plump and have a natural shine with bright green, fresh-looking caps. Use strawberries as soon after picking as possible for the best flavor and highest nutritional value.

#### Storage:

Store strawberries in the refrigerator, covered, unwashed, with the caps on. Do not crowd. If you have the space, gently spread the berries on a cookie sheet and cover with plastic wrap. Use berries within 2 to 3 days.

#### Handling:

Handle strawberries gently. Never remove the caps before washing. The cap prevents water from soaking into the berry, which lessens the flavor and changes the texture. To wash, cover berries in cold water and lift gently out of the water to drain. Dry by placing berries in a single layer on paper towels. After washing, remove the caps if necessary. Give the cap a gentle twist or use the point of a sharp paring knife or pointed spoon. Pat berries dry with paper towels before serving whole or sliced, fresh or cooked.

Sincerely,

*Vicki Wynn*

County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences