

Factors impacting yield and size of day-neutral strawberries

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Strawberries are a vital crop for California, the leading producer of fresh market strawberries in the United States, with a production value of more than \$2 billion in 2021. The Central Coast region, encompassing areas like Watsonville and Salinas, plays a pivotal role in strawberry production, contributing significantly to the state's overall production.

A recent study conducted by the University of California Cooperative Extension Office has provided valuable insights into the factors influencing fruit yield and size in day-neutral strawberry varieties Monterey and Cabrillo. The study, conducted over two growing [seasons](#) (2019–20 and 2020–21) on California's Central Coast, aimed to evaluate the effects of initial bare-root crown diameter and early-season flower cluster removal on [fruit production](#).

The paper is [published](#) in the journal *HortTechnology*.

In strawberry (*Fragaria ×ananassa*), initial bare-root crown diameter and early-season flower cluster removal have been two factors suspected of influencing fruit yield and size. The study revealed that initial bare-root crown diameter and early-season flower cluster removal had minimal impact on overall fruit yield and size in both Monterey and Cabrillo varieties. While there were some variations in fruit production during the first two months of harvest, these differences did not persist throughout the season.

Although fruit quantity and size are a priority to the grower, the plant itself is the critical element in determining both of these characteristics. Two important aspects of plant management for fruit production for growers, yet not well understood for the day-neutral varieties grown on the Central Coast of California, are the role of initial bare-root crown diameter at transplanting time and the management of flowering, in particular the early removal of the flower clusters, in shifting and enhancing fruit yield and size to take advantage of more lucrative market

times..

This study shows that over a 2-year period on the Central Coast in California, differences in bare-root transplant [crown](#) size or early-season flower removal in the two day-neutral varieties Monterey and Cabrillo do not result in significant differences in yield when measured over the whole season. Still, variations in yield in the first two months of production stemming from these two factors may be of use to growers seeking to modify their production during this window of time.

More information: Mark P. Bolda, Initial Bare-root Crown Size and Early-season Flower Cluster Removal Has Little Effect on Subsequent Plant Performance in Day-neutral Strawberry, *HortTechnology* (2023). [DOI: 10.21273/HORTTECH05161-22](https://doi.org/10.21273/HORTTECH05161-22)

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