

# Five Fruit Crops You Can Easily Grow in Hydroponics

A fruit is classified as such if it develops from a flower. Along with other plants like potatoes, peppers and egg plants, tomatoes are a member of the nightshade family.

Tomatoes can be cultivated by either sowing tomato seed, propagating them from cuttings or purchasing seedlings. Soil grown tomatoes may contain pathogens which spread easily in hydroponic systems. Tomatoes are classified as determinate and indeterminate cultivars whereby determinate options are great for small spaces. Indeterminate cultivars grow like vines and require staking or trellising and can potentially yield more. They grow best under day lengths between 12-18 hours.

## Chillies and pepper

Chillies and peppers can be propagated from seed, cuttings, seedlings and hydroponics. Both are suited for deep water culture. The seedlings are planted at a spacing of 45-60 cm away from each other. Many growers recommend using dilute nutrient solutions for chillies and pepper.

## Strawberries

Elsewhere, strawberries are recommended to be grown using the nutrient film technique (NFT). You can either start your berries from seed, runners or seedlings. For an almost immediately harvested crop, use seedlings from a reputable supplier. Indoor systems may need hand pollination.

Best conditions for strawberries are temperature above 18°C. Lower night temperatures to below 10°C is possible so as to improve flavours and sweetness in the berries.

## Goose berries and melons

First harvest of cape goose berries is obtained within 5 months after sowing. Transplanting of young seedlings into hydroponic system is done after thoroughly cleaning the roots. Fruit is ready for harvest 70-80 days post- pollination.

As for melons, selecting best suited cultivars considers the following; matching the cultivar to your climate and checking for resistance to powdery mildew varieties. High potassium level for melon growing is recommended for optimum flower production and fruit set.