

The Strawberry Store, LLC

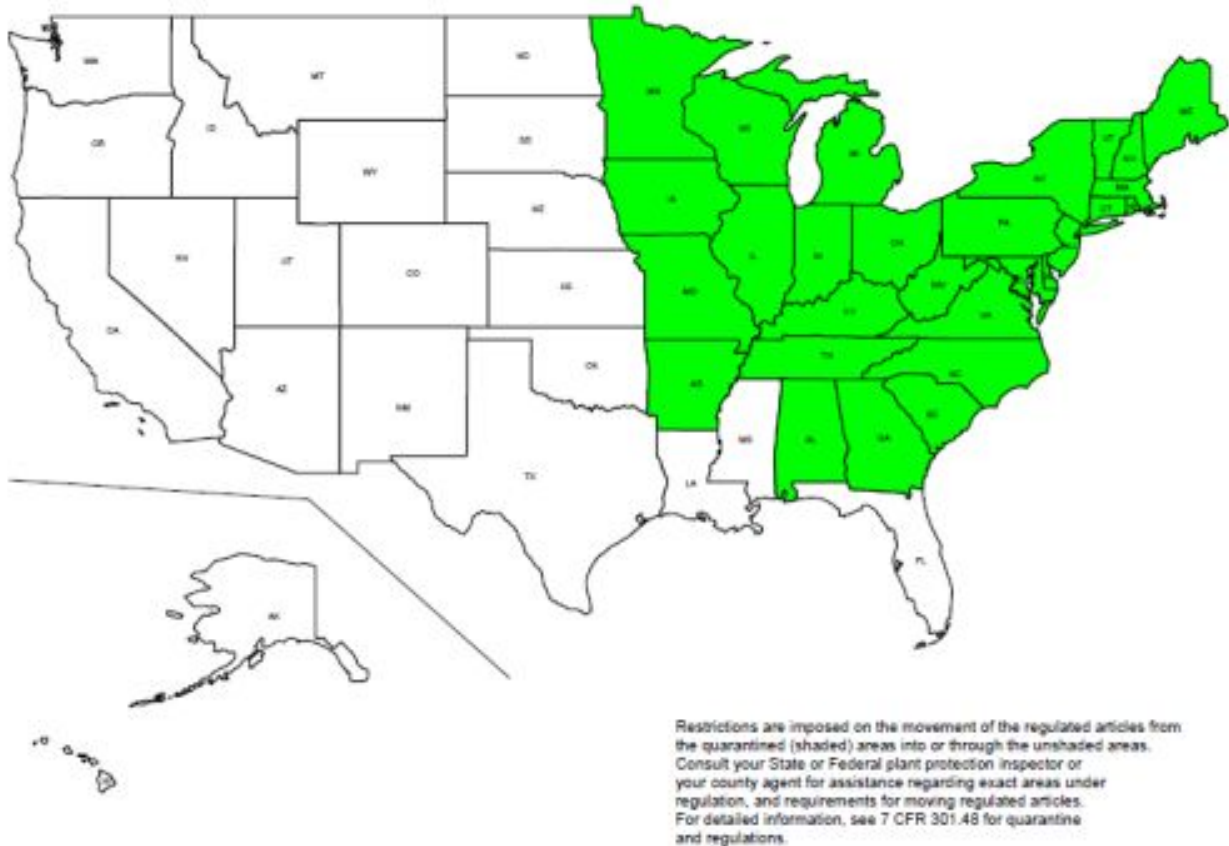
June 2010 Newsletter

It has been quite a while since the last newsletter so it's high time. There are a number of things I want to mention but probably will have to do a second newsletter soon to cover everything.

Quarantine Restrictions

First, I want to talk a little about the Japanese Beetle Quarantine which is restricting where we can ship plants for the summer and fall. There are two options for a nursery in the area of the country where Japanese beetles are established – the green shaded area below:

Japanese Beetle Regulated States



From June 1st to September 30th we cannot ship plants to the non-shaded areas (“white states”). We can ship seeds year round to any area.

There are two ways that a nursery can comply and be able to ship from an infected area to a non infected area. The first is a double screened growing area. This is what we did in the past and the only

“organic” method. For a variety of reasons we are not able to double screen this year so we cannot ship plants to the “white states”.

The second way to comply with the restrictions is to drench the soil before shipping the plants. The chemicals used for this drench do not fit into an organic type program – they are toxic pesticides.

So, you now understand why we cannot accept orders for plants from the “white states”. Actually, we can accept orders, we just cannot ship them until October 1st.

Pineberries

The next subject that needs to be addressed is pineberries. We are getting a LOT of questions. The main question is whether we will be offering these plants for sale. The short answer is, yes, but not quite yet. We are rooting runners now for future sales.

For those of you not familiar with pineberries, let me expound a bit. The name pineberries is a word coined by a plant breeder in Holland that I know. His name is Hans de Jonghe. Google his name and pineberries and you’ll find a lot of info.

Pineberries are actually *Fragaria x ananassa*. They really are THE ORIGINAL offspring at the genesis of this species. The short story is that the American wild strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana* and the Chilean wild strawberry, *Fragaria chiloensis* were taken to Europe in the 1700’s. These two crossed forming *F. ananassa* which are also known as Ananas Strawberries. When these plants were first described and named they were called pineapple strawberries because of the taste of pineapple – hence Hans naming them pineberries. They were/are white fruiting plants. Some of these plants were returned to America and were grown widely in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s. Seeds from these varieties were saved and planted and became some of the first varieties bred in the U.S. Please note that pictures that you will see are not of pure white strawberries. The “sunny side” of the fruit gets a pale flesh colored pink blush when exposed to the sun. The underside is white and so is fruit that is shaded by the plant or grown in the shade.

We have obtained three varieties of these remarkable heirloom plants. They are true heirloom varieties, being the first hybrids. We have had ‘White Carolina’ for a couple of years. We now have ‘White Pine’ and ‘White D’. ‘White Pine’ is a variety and is also used as a term to describe the whole group of plants.

Visit our new sister website at www.pineberries.us for a few pictures. We plan to put some in inventory soon on the ecommerce site for preordering for fall. No final decision on this has been made yet.

We are also being asked whether we will be selling seeds of these varieties. I have to admit that I am saving seeds which is pretty remarkable because the fruit is so pleasant tasting that it’s hard to NOT eat them. We have no plans to sell the seeds. Yes, we could, but in all the emails I’ve received and sent on the subject very few seem to understand what they are asking. Since we’re dealing with hybrids here, the seeds would not produce plants like the parents. In other words, they don’t propagate true to variety from seed. Some plants would appear to be similar to one of the parents but we’re dealing with

genetics here. Many of those I've corresponded with either slept through genetics class or need a refresher course. It's the realm of plant breeders, not home gardeners. Unless you're setup to screen hundreds, possibly thousands, of plants, don't ask about buying seeds.

If you want to learn more about these plants I'd suggest that you pick up a book that discusses the history of the strawberry. We have a couple of different books and find this information to be fascinating. My favorite book on the history of the strawberry is:

A History of the Strawberry: From Ancient Gardens to Modern Markets

By [Stephen and Sagen, James Wilhelm](#) (Author)

Virginia Strawberries

Virginia strawberries were mentioned in the section above. A few years ago I started looking at these native American wild strawberries. I found a source of a variety called 'Intensity' and started propagating and selling it. I was and am impressed with the taste and size of the fruit of this variety. The plant breeder mentioned above named Hans told me that Europeans actually prefer Virginia strawberries to some of the other wild types.

In the last couple of years I have started collecting varieties and will be selling them in the future. We have a large number of wild Virginias that we brought in this spring. We continue to propagate 'Intensity' and hope to have a large number available this fall and next spring. We are also working with and propagating the following varieties: 'Sheldon' (from Sheldon, ND), 'Toklat' (an Alaskan selection), 'Little Scarlet' (the famed European variety that is used to make very expensive "Little Scarlet" preserves (check out the cost of the preserves on Amazon.com), and even a "numbered variety" – one that has been tested but never named.

Stay tuned. We hope to reintroduce Virginia strawberries to home gardeners. Yes, they can still be found in the wild but the selections we are working on have been all but forgotten for many years.

Smartpots

We did some very preliminary tests this winter and spring with these pots. They are actually a patented fabric pot and information can be found at www.smartpots.com. Recently we did a video of our findings. Watch YouTube for this video. Our YouTube channel is gourmetberries.

Alpine Varieties

We have expanded our alpine varieties. This was mentioned in the last newsletter. We now offer seeds and plants of 'Reine des Vallees' (English translation 'Queen of the Valleys'). This is the European standard commercial variety. We have been impressed with the productivity of the plants and the flavor and aroma of the fruit. We recently updated our variety characteristics chart with information on this variety. I now consider this variety as a "must have" variety.

We also have 'Deesse des Vallees' (English translation 'Goddess of the Valleys') but are not yet offering it as seed. We just added some plants to the shopping cart and have started shipping them recently (to "shaded states"). This variety is a selection of Reine. It was patented but we're not clear right now whether the patent has expired or not. It's NOT a hybrid, it's a selection.

One other major "discovery". Last year we introduced 'Rodluvan' which is translated from Swedish as 'Red Riding Hood'. As with most alpine varieties there is not a lot of information available. A Swedish paper described it as very productive. Of course, we were skeptical but very pleasantly surprised this spring. Plants that we transplanted into one of our "wading pools" is producing fruit that is larger than any alpine we have ever seen. Two nights ago I picked several half pints of very large fruit. I weighed a few of the berries. The largest was 2.77 grams. It doesn't sound big, but by alpine standards it is a "giant" (not to be confused with 'New Giant' which also has large fruit).

The down side if you will for 'Rodluvan' is that it is a runner variety. We are working on ways to contain runner varieties and will discuss that in the near future. We also plan to do a video on the subject. Just a hint, it relates to what we already mentioned – wading pools. I think there are a number of runner varieties out there that have some very positive benefits to offer. They shouldn't be overlooked just because they produce runners. More on that in the future.

Stay Tuned

We'll cut it off for now. There are a number of other subjects to cover in detail. For now, we'll only mention that we are expanding our offerings for musk strawberries and have introduced 'Mara des Bois'. We hope to maintain our position as an innovator in the world of gourmet strawberries. Make sure and check in from time to time at our blog at <http://blog.thestrawberrystore.com>. There are other subjects there including more about alpine.

Mike Wellik
The Strawberry Store, LLC