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'ELSANTA' AUTUMN CROP PERFORMANCE USING DIFFERENT PLANT TYPES AND PLANTING DATES

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Abstract:

To evaluate the crop performance of 'Elsanta' strawberry plants grown in a soilless culture and under polyethylene tunnels for autumn production, a field experiment was established with different plant types and planting dates. Four types of cold stored plants, bare-rooted plants (A, A+ and waiting bed – WB) and tray plants, and three planting dates, 28 September, 10 October and 17 October were compared. Tray, WB and A⁺ plants had higher initial fresh plant weight, crown number and diameter than A plants. Cropping performance was more affected with plant type rather than with planting date. However, delaying planting date induced plants to produce in December and January with increasing proportion of unmarketable yield. The highest productivity was obtained with tray plants followed by WB and A⁺ plants that performed equally. Fruit quality did not vary between plant types. In general, plants of the 2nd planting date showed higher TSS values. Although yields were not affected by planting dates, earlier plantings should be considered to achieve most profitable autumn production with fruits of good quality.