

### Now is the Hour – to Build a Strawberry Tower!

If you have a strawberry patch, do the weeds, slugs, birds and runners just make you want to scream? Consider building a unique strawberry-growing structure designed by Jan and Michael Gertley and thoroughly explained in their book *Garden Structures*.

The base of the structure is a square measuring 27½ inches on each side. Four 63-inch long cedar boards are attached to a central six-foot cedar post to form the pyramidal framework. The ten angled soil-retaining boards on each side range from 9 inches to nearly 26 inches in length, providing space for one plant on the top "shelf", and four plants on the bottom one. The tower accommodates a total of 90 to 100 plants.

We grew the day-neutral *Tristar* strawberry plants in a tower this summer, with no weed problems whatsoever, and with very little slug or bird damage. If voles are a potential problem where you intend to put up a tower, lay hardware cloth over the area. Then put heavy-duty landscape cloth over the hardware cloth and cover that with an attractive mulch. Installing a copper strip around the base of the structure will dissuade slugs from investigating the berries, and bird netting can easily be placed over the structure to keep the birds out. Installing an automatic drip system for watering will make every bowl of berries taste just that much sweeter.

### References

Gertley, Jan and Michael. *Garden Structures*. Newtown, CT: The Taunton Press, 1998.

Strick, B.C. [Growing Strawberries in Your Home Garden](#). Oregon State University, EC 1307, revised March, 2008, retrieved November 30, 2004.