

New ARS Strawberry is a “Keepsake”



Did you know that ARS once saved the strawberry industry? In the 1950s, ARS released the first varieties that could survive red stele, a root-rotting fungus. Since then, ARS has bred and released dozens of strawberry cultivars that can stand up to the many challenges growers face—such as insects, diseases, short growing seasons, and the rigors of harvest and transport. One of the latest strawberry releases is “Keepsake,” a variety from ARS’s Genetic Improvement of Fruits and Vegetables Laboratory, in Beltsville, MD, **bred to have improved shelf life.**

Keepsake does well in cold storage and is firm enough for handling during harvest and packaging. It can be harvested as early as May, and the good-sized berries are sweet and juicy. Keepsake is resistant to anthracnose fruit rot, one of the most serious fruit rots world-wide. This berry should perform well in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast areas of the United States. Keepsake is a close relative of “Flavorfest,” another ARS standout strawberry with superior disease resistance, yield, flavor, and postharvest quality. Look for Keepsake strawberries in your local farm stand or pick-your-own farm soon!



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