



Innovative Organic Nursery Reiterates its Stance on Organic Strawberry Production

July 16, 2026

Redding, California - July 16, 2026 -

With the internet abuzz about the state of strawberry sourcing and agricultural methods, Innovative Organic Nursery (ION) is putting its long-held commitment to organic strawberry planting stock and consumer education front and center.

For the past ten years, ION has been in the business of supplying top-tier organic berry plants to everyone from commercial growers to home gardeners. As consumer interest in organic growing practices continues to rise, the nursery has also seen increased demand from home gardeners seeking trusted sources for organically produced strawberry plants.

The company was founded over a decade ago by Daniel Nelson and James Rickert. Since its launch, it has become one of the few nurseries nationwide to devote itself entirely to organic strawberry plants. Whether a backyard grower is after ten plants or a large operation is looking to put in over a million, ION is there to serve

them.

Lately, online discourse surrounding pesticides and strawberries has stoked anxiety among the public about how our food is grown. Misinformation has a way of running rampant, but for Nelson and Rickert, it is an opportunity for sensible dialogue on the matter.

“People are afraid of what they see online about strawberries and chemicals,” said co-founder Daniel Nelson. “We could be drawn into every debate, but we prefer to stick to the truth of what we do at ION and how we help people put food on the table in a way that fits their values.”

James Rickert would add that when consumers know where their food is coming from, they are better off.

“You should make your purchasing decisions with an eye toward what matters to you,” Rickert said. “Whatever system you put your money behind is the one you are encouraging. It is a good time for folks to ask questions and get educated.”

ION’s planting stock is grown under CCOF organic certification – a distinction the company says sets it apart in an industry where organic certification often stops short of the planting stock itself. Given that this entire release is responding to public anxiety about pesticides, this is the company’s strongest credibility anchor and deserves to be stated plainly rather than implied.

As part of the wider industry, ION keeps in touch with fruit marketing organizations and growers big and small.

“We rub elbows with a lot of different companies out there,” Nelson said. “It is no easy job to produce a fresh, flavorful strawberry and get it to market consistently across North America, and we have respect for the work the many important industry players put in. Our job is to supply an organic planting stock option to those who want it.”

Not all organic producers go so far as to use organic planting stock, which is why ION was started in the first place and is currently the only certified organic nursery in the industry operating at scale.

The wholesale nursery ION started out as has grown into a diversified enterprise, serving seed companies, online retailers and direct customers alike. Partnerships with the likes of Johnny’s Selected Seeds and Gardyn, Inc. have opened up access to the consumer nationwide.

The company has added new low-elevation commercial production to back up its existing high-elevation nursery facilities, giving it the capacity to offer a wider range of varieties and schedules to its growers.

Nelson puts it this way: "Our job is to be there for growers when they need us and to have the options to offer. Over the past decade, we have worked to remove any technical barriers to what we can supply."

But Rickert would say that has come to mean more than just being an option on the table.

"In a sense, it has become leadership," he said. "We have had our share of headwinds and challenges, yet we keep pushing ahead. We have put in the investment to serve our growers and gardeners better and proved that organic planting stock is viable."

The home gardening segment has been where ION has recently seen some of its most notable growth. With consumers wanting to get their hands on top-notch strawberry varieties and organic material, the company has made plants available via its website and with partners to meet that need.

"We have customers who will put in over a million plants and another who will order ten. We like to think we do a good job of serving all those in between," Rickert said.

They are also rolling out exclusive new lines with better flavor and disease resistance. Varieties like Denali and Eclipse are putting unique genetics at the disposal of small growers and home gardeners that were not on the market before.

"People are particular about flavor and what they put in front of their families, so we make sure to bring the best quality to market," Rickert said.

Nelson says you can already place your orders for the 2027 fruiting season. "We are committed to supporting our customers, be it a large operation or ten plants in a backyard. We want to see more people grow their own food."

"We don't go after every headline," Nelson said. "This is a marathon. We have been at it for nearly eleven years and will keep investing in the folks who want to grow a fine strawberry."

Rickert knows the value of it from his own experience; he put in twenty-five Denali plants in his garden recently.

"I can tell you strawberries fresh from the garden are hard to beat," he said. "Eleven years in, I'm still learning something new about this fruit — and that's exactly why we keep showing up."

In the end, the founders' message is simple — know who grows your food, and support what matters to you.

“We’re thankful for the support,” Nelson said. “It’s a simple mission for us: give people exceptional organic plants so they can grow some healthy, tasty fruit, whether that is ten acres or ten plants.”

Since its founding in early 2015, Innovative Organic Nursery (ION) has established itself as a premier source of CCOF-certified organic strawberry planting stock in North America for everyone from commercial interests to the home gardener. The company introduced its first organic raspberry and blackberry plants recently. ION prides itself on supplying premium, certified organic berry plants and is dedicated to furthering innovation in berry production through its own plant sales through its own web store and through its valued relationships with major seed and gardening firms.

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Innovative Organic Nursery

In January 2016, James and Daniel teamed up to start the first and only organic strawberry transplant nursery with plants available to all organic growers. Hence, Innovative Organic Nursery, LLC (ION) was born.

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