Cold damage to strawberry flowers

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It has been an unusually cool April, especially the last 2 weeks. This is following a warmer than average March. If you have strawberry plants starting to flower the flowers are going to be susceptible to cold damage during one of our chillier nights. Figure 1 shows two flowers, the one on the top is suspended above the ground while the second one is almost resting on the ground. This small difference in elevation may have been the difference between a cold damaged flower—the flower on top with black center, and one that is not damaged—bottom one. If the plants had been covered during the night it probably would have reduced or stopped any cold damage from occurring. But the plants need to be uncovered in the morning or they will get too hot. The cold damaged flowers should be removed, as they could be the starting place for something like botrytis.