



Growing Raspberries

Why Grow Raspberries?

They are delicious, delicate, and best enjoyed freshly picked. They also are long-lived: red & yellow raspberries can remain productive up to 15 years; black raspberries stay productive for 4 to 8 years.

Types and Selections

Your first choice is between types that produce once, in early summer (floricane-fruiting), and those that produce twice, in summer and fall (primocane-fruiting). Next you need to choose among many that vary in fruit color and flavor. You may wish to conduct taste tests before making a selection. Or you may consult the OSU publication on cultivated varieties (cultivars) that perform well in our region. Examples: red floricane-fruiting cultivars (Willamette, Meeker & Cascade Delight); red primocane-fruiting cultivars (Vintage, Heritage & Caroline); yellow primocane-fruiting (Fallgold & Anne); black floricane-fruiting (Munger & Jewel); and purple floricane-fruiting (Royalty & Brandywine).

Selecting a Site

Raspberries can tolerate partial shade, but in full sun they have better yield and fruit quality. Avoid a site where potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, other caneberries, or strawberries have grown the last 3 years. These crops are susceptible to many of the same insects and diseases as raspberries. Grow plants in well-drained, fertile, loamy soil with moderate water-holding capacity. Avoid heavy clay soils.

Preparing the Soil

It is best to grow raspberries on a raised mound 1½ to 2 feet high & 2 feet wide to provide excellent drainage. Or build a raised bed with good drainage. Soil pH should be between 5.6 and 6.5.

In the year before planting, eliminate all perennial weeds. Apply organic matter in the summer or fall – you may use manure, compost, leaves, or sawdust -- mix into the soil. Be sure it is decomposed by planting time. Plant raspberries the year after soil preparation.

Planting

Raspberries are usually sold as bare-root plants. Purchase certified disease-free plants to minimize disease problems. Plant early in the spring as soon as soil is workable. To plant, dig a hole in amended soil that is wide enough to accommodate roots spread out. Place the highest point where roots attach to canes, about 1 to 2 inches below ground level. Cover with soil and water well to remove air pockets.

Fertilizing

In the planting year, fertilize each plant with a total of 2 ounces of nitrogen (N) per a 10-foot row. Use a well-balanced fertilizer such as 16-16-16 or an organic source (e.g. cotton seed meal). You can calculate the amount needed by dividing 2 ounces by the percent of nitrogen. For example, you need 12 ounces of 16-16-16 fertilizer to get 2 ounces of N (2 ounces/percent of N in fertilizer= ounces of fertilizer needed). In new plantings, do not apply all the fertilizer at once. Divide the total amount into thirds. Apply the first third 2 weeks after planting, the next third 1 month later, and the final third an additional month later.

For established plants, apply fertilizer annually to maintain good growth. Each year, apply a total of 2 to 3 ounces of nitrogen per 10-foot row. This would be 13 to 19 ounces of 16-16-16 fertilizer or 2.5 pounds of 5-5-3 fertilizer. Apply half between late March to early April and the rest in early June. Fertilize primocane-fruiting raspberries with an additional 0.5 to 1 ounce of N in late July.

Watering

Established plants need 1 to 1½ inches of water per week from mid-June through late summer. Take care to water the root zone only while avoiding wetting the fruiting area.

Weed Management

Cultivate to control weeds and canes that develop outside the rows. Cultivate no deeper than 1 to 2 inches to prevent root damage. Mulch can be used to suppress weeds and maintain soil moisture.

Trellising & Pruning

Pruning methods for raspberry vary a great deal among raspberry types. Very briefly, summer-bearing raspberries need support to hold the canes upright. Prune by removing dead floricanes after fruiting in summer or in the fall. In winter thin out any broken or weak primocanes and train the canes to the trellis (these may be topped to about 6 feet). To produce two crops on primocane-fruiting raspberries, remove dead floricanes after fruiting in summer or fall. Then remove the dead tip on the primocanes (part that fruited last fall). To produce only one crop of primocane-fruiting raspberry, prune in late winter by cutting all canes back to the ground. The fall crop will be borne on the tips of the primocane that grow during the summer. In this scenario, fall-bearing raspberries need only a temporary support structure.

Pests and Diseases

Phytophthora root rot can be a serious problem. Heavy clay soils and wet root areas are ideal conditions for this fungus that kills the floricanes. Other pests include root weevil, spider mites, aphids, powdery mildew, *Anthrachnose* and *Verticilium* wilt.

Additional information

OSU Publications available online at <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/>

- *Growing Raspberries in Your Home Garden* EC 1306
- *Raspberry Cultivars for the Pacific Northwest* PNW 655
- *Sustainable Gardening Handbook* EM 8742
- *Growing Berries on the Oregon Coast: Raspberries and Blackberries* EM 9180 (content is also relevant for the Willamette Valley)
- Learn how to prune raspberries from an online module at <https://workspace.oregonstate.edu/course/pruning-raspberries?hsLang=en>

Master Gardener™ advice

- Call Home Horticulture Helpline: 503-655-8631 (Clackamas County), 503-821-1150 (Washington County), or 503-445-4608 (Multnomah County).
- For 10-Minute University™ handouts and class schedule, visit www.cmastergardeners.org or www.metromastergardeners.org.

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