

Care Guidelines

RASPBERRIES

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Cultural Requirements: For new raspberry plantings, create a raised bed 8-10" high and 18-36" wide. Plant new starts 1" deeper than they grew in the nursery. An idea is to use the cement bed borders that form a circle and use a "Rose Column" for support. These can be placed artfully into your landscape creating a small island of raspberries. These borders don't prevent the root suckering, but they do tend to limit the raspberries "wandering." Raspberry roots tend to travel parallel to the ground and will rarely dive under objects. This form of landscaping also allows you 360° access to your raspberry plant at the time of harvest.

Planting Instructions: It is best to plant your rows to run in a north to south direction. This ensures that one row will not shade out the other (this is not mandatory). Recommended spacing between plants is 18" inches and 5'-6' between the rows. Soak roots in water for a couple of hours before planting. Make certain that you dig your planting hole large enough to avoid wadding the roots. Be sure any white sprouts growing from the crown of the new plants are covered at least 1½" deep. Prune back the old cane 1"-2" above the soil line. (Note: All new growth will come from the primary buds on the crown; not the old cane.) Raspberries are susceptible to root rot, so water just enough to settle the soil, then only when you see new growth breaking the ground. This will help prevent root rot in that a dormant plant is not transpiring water until the buds break. Existing raspberries in the garden will benefit from being "hilled up" by adding not more than 8" of good quality, well-drained soil, or even quality potting soil, on top of the row. Do this in March before the new spring growth emerges from the crowns. The new growth will force through the topsoil and root into it. Cane growth is stimulated and possible root rot is minimized. Good, well-drained soil is the best way to prevent root rot. Just pile the soil on top of the row and AVOID watering it in. Feed a basic 10-10-10 fertilizer every 4-6 weeks during growing season. This is all that raspberries and blackberries need to grow their best!

Pruning and Training: Often only the shoots of suckers that start close to the original plant are allowed to grow, thus the canes are kept grouped together in the so-called hill. However, the home gardener may wish to let the hills grow together, thereby conserving space in the garden. Unwanted suckers arising too far from the mother plant may be removed as they appear. After the first year when the raspberries are dormant, thin out the weaker or damaged canes leaving yourself 4 to 6 strong canes per hill.

One-crop or spring crop raspberries fruit on two-year-old wood. After harvest, the two year old fruiting wood begins to die and can be removed. The remaining one-year-old canes for the next summers' crop can be cut back to head height.

Two-crop or ever-bearing raspberries, as they are known in the trade, are handled much the same except that they fruit in the fall on one-year-old canes. The fruit will appear on the top foot or so of the cane, and it is a common practice to remove the portion of the cane that fruited after harvest, leaving the rest of the cane to produce next summer's crop. The ever-bearing raspberry thus produces a summer crop on two-year-old wood and a fall crop on one-year-old wood. As with the one-crop raspberries, the two-year-old canes die and are removed after the harvest or during the following winter.

Red raspberries can be supported either with tall stakes or ideally with a two-wire trellis. The wires of the trellis are usually placed about 1' below the height at which the canes have been pruned. The wires are placed on each side of the post with large staples or nails. Sometimes crosspieces are nailed to the posts so that the two wires are 12"-15" apart. A second set of wires may sometimes be placed a few feet below the top wires. The canes can be tied to the top set of wires. Certain varieties may need no support at all! The ever-bearing raspberries fall into this category.