

The Puget Sound region has an ideal raspberry-growing climate. Lucky for us, because the cost of fresh raspberries climbs higher each year at the grocery store, due in part to the fragility of the fruit and their special handling requirements. If you want to enjoy an abundance of fresh raspberries, why not grow this easy to grow, bountiful berry yourself?

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS & SUPPORTS

Raspberries like full sun and well-draining soil rich in organic matter. They do not like wet feet, so if your ground is wet, plant the berries on a mound or raised bed at least 18 inches high. Plant your canes about 18" apart in rows 5 feet apart. Be sure they are at the same level as they were planted in the nursery pot. After planting, mulch with compost or manure to discourage weeds and conserve moisture. New growth will rise from the roots or from the base of the planted cane. Newly-planted roots should produce 3 to 5 canes the first year.

Raspberries form tall arching canes that can be unruly on their own. One of the most manageable ways to support them is to use wires fastened between two stout posts. The upper wire should be 4 to 5' above the ground and the lower wire no higher than 2 ½'. Tie the canes to the wires securely but not too tightly.

SUMMER CROP & EVERBEARING VARIETIES

On summer crop varieties (one crop per year) canes will bear fruit the following year after they grow. On these varieties, once a cane has fruited it will begin to die and can be removed down to the ground in the fall. During the winter, thin out the one-year-old canes that remain, removing the weaker ones. Usually you would leave 7 to 10 strong canes per hill. The canes that are selected to remain can be cut back to head-height.

Everbearing varieties normally produce two crops per year—summer and fall. They produce a fall crop on first-year canes, then a crop the following summer on the two-year old canes. They therefore need to be pruned differently than the summer crop varieties. Typically the fall crop appears on the top foot or so of the cane; after harvest, remove only the top portion of the cane that has fruited. Next year's summer crop is produced on the remainder of the cane. Once the entire cane has fruited, it can be removed. In the winter, prune weaker canes to improve success of healthy canes.

OTHER CARE NOTES

Fertilize your raspberries in early spring and again after harvest with a well-balanced organic fertilizer such as E. B. Stone Rose and Flower Food or Espoma Berry-Tone. Be sure to use a fertilizer formulated for flowering/fruited.

Root rot is the most common problem for raspberries, often because of poorly draining soil. There are no chemical remedies for this soil-borne disease. Infected plants will need to be destroyed altogether, and the soil fixed before you can plant again. This is why it's better to avoid the problem altogether, selecting raspberry varieties that are root-rot resistant or amending the soil to improve drainage. Raised beds are a quick solution as well.

RED SUMMER CROP (ONE CROP) VARIETIES

Coho Very large, firm, juicy red berries. Very late ripening; extends the growing season. Excellent flavor. Vigorous and very productive; developed at OSU.

Meeker Large, sweet red berries. Good for eating fresh, freezing, and canning. Mid to late with a long harvest. Requires well-drained soil. Vigorous and productive; resistant to Botrytis.

Tulameen Very large, bright red fruit with fine flavor. Introduction from British Columbia. Late; produces for up to 50 days, through July and August. Very susceptible to root rot.

Willamette Large, soft, dark red berry with tart rich flavor. Excellent for fresh eating, canning, and freezing. Early. Requires well-drained soils and mild winters; vigorous and productive.

RED EVERBEARING (TWO CROP) VARIETIES

Amity Large firm red berries with classic raspberry flavor. Excellent for fresh eating, jams, jellies, and freezing. Ripens July and September.

Crimson Night Medium to large, dark purple-red berries with strong sweet flavor. Attractive and delicious. High yielding but compact canes.

Heritage Medium sized, attractive red fruit ripens in July and September. Erect canes are vigorous, needing little support.

YELLOW RASPBERRY (TWO CROP) VARIETY

Fall Gold Medium size, soft, sweet golden berries. Excellent for eating fresh and processing. Ripens in July; second crop ripens from late August to frost. Hardy.

BLACK/PURPLE RASPBERRY (ONE CROP) VARIETY

Jewel Black Raspberry Large, firm, glossy black berries. Sweet flavor. Excellent for preserves, freezing, or fresh eating. Good yields on vigorous upright plants. Midseason.

RED PATIO VARIETY (BUSH AND BERRY)

Raspberry Shortcake® Medium size, round red berry. Dwarf, thornless three foot canes thrive in containers without staking. One-crop variety with a long season of harvest. Once fruiting is done, cut out the canes that fruited to encourage new canes for next year's fruit.