

Growing Raspberries

Why?

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, and those that produce twice, in summer and fall. Next you need to choose among the many colored berries that vary in 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. Here are a few examples: summer-bearing cultivars (Willamette, Meeker & Cascade Delight); fall-bearing cultivars (Heritage & Caroline); yellow varieties (Fallgold & Anne); blackcaps (Munger & Jewel); and purple (Royalty & Brandywine).

Terminology

Raspberries have two types of canes. Primocanes are one-year old canes that grow and produce only leaves. Floricanes are two-year old canes that produce berries and leaves. See the pruning section on the importance of this fact.

Selecting a Site

Raspberries can tolerate partial shade, but full sun yields best. 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

Plant raspberries the year after soil preparation. In the year before, eliminate all perennial weeds. Apply organic matter in the summer or fall – you may use manure, compost, leaves, or sawdust. Dig, plow, or till the material into the soil. Be sure it is decomposed by planting time. It is best to grow raspberries on a raised mound 1½ to 2 feet high & 2 feet wide to provide excellent drainage. Soil pH should be between 5.5 and 6.5.

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 press firmly to remove air pockets.

Fertilizing

In the planting year, fertilize each plant with a total of 0.5 to 1 ounce of nitrogen (N). Use a well-balanced fertilizer such as 16-16-16. You need 2.1 ounce of 16-16-16 fertilizer to get 1 ounce of nitrogen.

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 12.5 to 18.7 ounces of 16-16-16 fertilizer. Apply one third when canes start to grow (usually in March), one third the end of May and the rest at the end of June. If you use manure, apply it in late fall or early winter.

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 foliage.

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

Summer-bearing raspberries need support to hold the cane upright. Prune by removing dead floricanes in late fall. Between January & March, clean up canes and shorten canes to about 6 feet. Fall-bearing raspberries either have two small crops or one big fall crop. If you want two crops, remove old floricanes after you have harvested the summer crop. The fall crop will be borne on the tips of the primocanes that grow during the summer. For a fall crop only, cut down all canes to ground level in late March. In this scenario, fall-bearing raspberries need only a temporary support structure.

Pests and diseases

Phytophthora root rot can be a serious problem of raspberries. 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, anthracnose and Verticillium wilt.

Additional information

The following are just a few of the many available resources:

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

Growing Raspberries in Your Home Garden EC 1306

Raspberry Cultivars for Oregon EC 1310-E

Sustainable Gardening Handbook EM 8742

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.
- Look for Master Gardeners at area Farmers' Markets.

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