



Growing Raspberries in a Home Garden

Raspberries are a favorite of many home gardeners. The fruit can be eaten fresh or processed into jam, jelly, or juice. Surplus fruit also can be frozen.

The four types of raspberries commonly grown in home gardens include black, purple, summer-bearing red, and fall-bearing red. There also are several yellow raspberry varieties (cultivars).

Growth and Fruiting Characteristics

The shoots of purple, black, and summer-bearing red raspberries are strictly vegetative during the first growing season. These first year canes are referred to as primocanes. The following year, these same canes (now called floricanes) flower, produce fruit, and then die.

The growth and fruiting characteristics of fall-bearing red raspberries differ slightly from other types. Fall-bearing cultivars naturally produce two crops. The first crop is produced in late summer or early fall at the tips of the current season's growth. The following year, the lower portions of the same canes produce a summer crop. After the second crop, the canes die.

Red raspberries produce new canes from buds located at the base of the previous season's growth and on their roots. Because red raspberries sucker freely, they need to be confined to a 1- to 2-foot-wide hedgerow. Black and most purple raspberries produce new canes from buds located at the base of the existing canes. Since black and purple raspberries don't sucker from their roots, they tend to remain in their original planting area.

The growth and fruiting characteristics of yellow raspberries are similar to red raspberries. The only difference is fruit color. The care and pruning of summer-bearing and fall-bearing yellow raspberries are identical to their red counterparts.

Site Selection

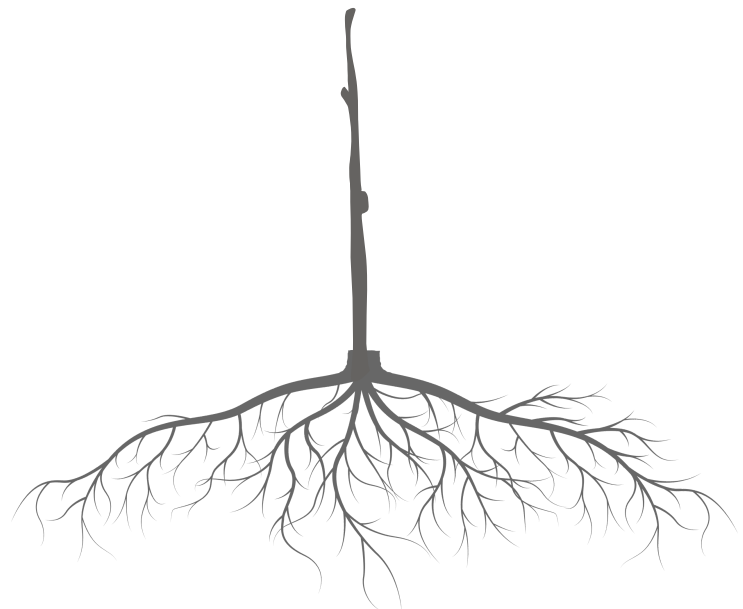
Raspberries adapt to a wide range of soil types. They grow best in well-drained, fertile soils with a pH of 6.0 to 6.8. Raspberries grow poorly in heavy clay or poorly drained soils. Incorporating well-rotted barnyard manure or compost often improves poor soils. Planting in raised beds can improve drainage.

When selecting a planting site, choose an area that receives full sun. The planting site should receive at least 6 hours of direct sun each day. Avoid shady areas near large trees and shrubs. Also, avoid areas that are heavily infested with perennial weeds. Control of perennial weeds, such as quackgrass, is extremely difficult in a raspberry planting. If possible, remove all wild brambles near the new raspberry planting to prevent the spread of disease.

Planting

Plant red raspberries 2 inches deeper, and black and purple raspberries 1 inch deeper, than previously grown. Dig a hole slightly larger than the spread of the plant's root system.

Position the plant in the hole, spread out its roots, and backfill with soil. Firmly press the soil around the roots as you backfill. Water each plant thoroughly and prune back the canes, leaving a maximum of 2 to 3 inches above the soil.



Raspberry Pruning

Fall/ Everbearing Red/Yellow Raspberries

Two Crop System

Spring Pruning

Remove weak, diseased, damaged canes to ground level in early spring.

Prune out the tips of the canes that fruited the previous year.

(Approximately the upper 1/3 of the canes).

Lower portions of the canes will be your summer crop.

After harvesting summer crop remove old fruiting canes.

One Crop System

Spring Pruning

Prune all canes back to ground level in early spring. Doing so eliminates the summer crop, but often allows the fall crop to mature one to two weeks earlier. No summer pruning is necessary. Total crop yield is larger using the one crop system versus the two crop system.

Summer-bearing Red Raspberries

Summer-bearing raspberries fruit on second year canes (floricane)

Remove weak, diseased, damaged canes to ground level in early spring.

Leave the most vigorous canes, those that are approximately 1/4 inch in diameter when measured 30 inches from the ground.

Remaining canes should be thinned to about 6 inches apart.

Also, prune out the tips of the canes that died because of winter injury. Cut them back to live tissue. If the canes suffered little winter dieback, remove the top 1/4 of the canes.

After the last harvest, prune off the old fruiting canes (floricanes) at the soil surface.

