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How to Grow Raspberries: The Complete Guide



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Botanical Name:	<i>Rubus</i> <i>spp.</i>
Plant Type:	Fruit
Season:	Full Sun

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Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Raspberries

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)

Last Updated: April 14, 2024



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Raspberries are among the easiest fruits to grow and, for the space they occupy, produce even more fruit than strawberries. Isn't it time you gave them a go?

Learn about planting and growing raspberries, one of the most popular berries in North America. One raspberry bush can produce several hundred berries per season!

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Raspberries are shrubs belonging to the Rosaceae family in the genus *Rubus*. Not only are raspberries perfect for picking and eating straight off the stem, but they're also wonderful in jams, pies and tarts, or smoothies and drinks. Plus, fresh raspberries are an excellent source of vitamin C to support the immune system and help fight infections.

There are two types of raspberries, both with their own specific requirements for growing:

1. **Summer-fruiting raspberries are more common.** They develop their fruit on last year's growth and bear one crop per season in summertime (often June or July).
2. **Ever-bearing raspberries** (also called **fall-bearing** or **autumn-bearing**) produce berries on new canes. They bear a fall crop and can also produce fruit the following summer.

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All raspberries are self-fertile, so you only need one bush to produce fruit. They're best pollinated by bees and will start producing fruit a year after planting.

Though raspberry bushes are naturally inclined to grow in cooler climates, the plants now come in many varieties suited to a range of [planting zones](#).

The Importance of Pruning Raspberries

All raspberries will need pruning annually! Raspberries are perennials.

for only two summers. During the first year, the new green cane (**primocane**) grows vegetatively. The cane develops a brown bark, is dormant in winter, and during the second growing season is called a **floricane**. It produces fruit in early to mid-summer and then dies. New primocanes are produced each year, so fruit production continues year after year. It's your job to prune out those dead canes each year.

See more pruning advice below.

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PLANTING

Raspberries grow best in a sunny location, but unlike many fruits, they will also grow successfully in a partially shaded spot.

However, the more sun, the more fruit!

The planting site should have rich and well-drained soil, great air circulation, and shelter from the wind. Avoid a wet and windy area, as raspberries do not like to stand in water or totally dry out.

Every year, feed your raspberry plants with a couple of inches of compost or aged manure; dig it into the soil a couple of weeks before planting (A good rate is about 3 1/2 cubic feet of compost per 100 square feet).

Plant your berries far from wild-growing berries. Otherwise, you risk spreading wild pests and diseases to your cultivated berry plants.

- Start with one-year-old raspberry canes from a reputable nursery. Plant the early spring once the ground thaws out and can be worked ([See your local frost dates](#)).
- In mild areas, you could also plant in late autumn to give the plants a head start.
- Plant potted transplants in the spring after the threat of frost has passed.



How to Plant Raspberries

- Before planting, soak the roots for an hour or two.
- Dig a hole that is roomy enough for the roots to spread. If you're planting multiple bushes, it's easiest to dig a trench.

plant 1 or 2 inches above the ground.

- Canes should be spaced 18 inches apart, with about four feet between rows.
- Fill the soil back in, and tamp it down with your foot.
- Once the canes are planted, cut them down to 9 inches tall to encourage new growth. (Yes, it will look like a broken branch sticking out of the ground!)
- Depending on your plant variety, you may need to fashion a support to hold up canes. Many grow to head height.
- A trellis or a fence are good options. If you have a row, drive in two six-foot posts at the end of the row and stretch galvanized wire between the posts. Summer-fruiting raspberries need three horizontal wires, and the fall types could do with two wires.

Check out this video to learn how to plant raspberries.

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...pberries from Planting to Harvest



GROWING

- Mulching is important throughout the season to conserve moisture and suffocate weeds. Keep a thick layer of mulch surrounding plants at all times.
- Water one inch per week from spring until after harvest. Regular watering is better than infrequent deep soaking.
- Keep your raspberry bushes tidy by digging up any “suckers” or canes that grow well away from the rows; if you don’t dig them up, they’ll draw nutrients away and you’ll have fewer

- If you wish, you can replant the suckers, and you'll have new plants! Dig them up, set them in a fresh area of prepared ground, and water them after planting.

How to Prune Raspberries

Prune summer-fruiting raspberries immediately after you're done picking! Cut only the canes that produced berries back down to the ground.

(Remember, this plant produces berries on two-year-old canes while one-year-old canes grow right beside them. You shouldn't have trouble telling which is which: the older canes have brown stems, and the young ones are still green. Prune only the older ones, the ones that have finished their fruitful year.)

Tie the remaining canes to the supporting wires with garden string. There should not be any more than one cane every four inches of wire, so cut down additional canes.


Ever-bearing or fall-bearing raspberries

- This is easy. Just cut all canes back to the ground in late winter before growth begins in the spring. They give fruit on canes that are in their first year of growth, after which there is no reason to keep them. Mow them to the ground or use pruning shears for a small patch.
- Clean up all debris—diseases and pests overwinter.
- Pruning is only required during the growing season if you want to keep a uniform order. Dig or pull up new canes that grow well away from the rows. If your raspberry canes are disease-free you can transplant them to raise more plants.

Note: The above assumes you are harvesting a fall crop. To get *both* fall and following summer crop, do not remove the primocanes that produced the fall crop. Prune them back in spring to about 12 inches above the support, or to the last

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Raspberry (9 plants) - row length: 19' 9"

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Types

There are many, many raspberry varieties available today—and each one is unique!

Ask your local garden center or [cooperative extension service](#) which raspberry varieties are best suited for your area.

Here are a few to get you started:

- **‘Canby’**: red berries; summer-bearing; nearly thornless; recommended for New England, Upper Great Lakes,

- **‘Heritage’**: red berries; ever-bearing; recommended for the Mid-Atlantic and Ohio Valley
- **‘Plainsman’**: red berries; ever-bearing; does well in higher altitudes (the Rockies and High Plains)
- **‘Fallgold’**: yellow berries; ever-bearing; recommended for the Upper Midwest and Canada
- **‘Double Gold’**: yellow berries tinged with peach; ever-bearing; better for warmer areas, as the fall crop can be quite late
- **‘Royalty’**: purple berries; summer-bearing; better for warmer areas
- **‘Jewel’**: black berries; summer-bearing; disease-resistant, and great for warmer areas
- **‘Black Hawk’**: black berries; summer-bearing; heat and drought tolerant

Tired of raspberries? Try your hand at growing [blackberries](#), [blueberries](#), or [strawberries](#) instead!

HARVESTING

ever-bearers may bear small berries in their first autumn.

- In early summer, berries will ripen over about 2 weeks. You will need to pick berries every couple of days!
- Try to harvest berries on a sunny day when they are dry.
- Gently pull raspberries away from their central plug once they're richly colored all over. They should come away easily. Don't tug too hard on your raspberries when picking. A ripe raspberry will leave the vine willingly.



How to Store Raspberries

- Raspberries won't keep for long, so enjoy them soon after picking them!
- They can be kept refrigerated for

moldy and mushy if not kept dry in storage. If you do need to wash them, let them air dry completely before storing them.

- Raspberries can be frozen! As with [freezing blueberries](#), make a single layer of berries on a cookie sheet. When frozen, place into airtight bags. Use on waffles, in cereal, or whenever you need a refreshing, healthy snack!

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PESTS/DISEASES

(Black raspberries are more susceptible to this type of damage than red or purple.)

- Keep an eye out for **spider mites** and [Japanese beetles](#) from June through August. Raspberries are a favorite of Japanese beetles in particular.
- [Rabbits](#) love to eat the canes in winter. A chicken wire fence will help prevent rabbit damage.
- [Powdery Mildew](#)
- **Cane Borers**

WIT AND WISDOM

- Raspberries are a great source of dietary fiber and Vitamin C, and may help to protect against disease. Check out [Raspberries: Health Benefits](#) to learn how healthy raspberries really are!

RECIPES

RASPBERRY-RHUBARB PIE

**RASPBERRY HONEY CAKE WITH
RASPBERRY SAUCE**

RASPBERRY SHORTBREAD

**RASPBERRY ROASTED BEETS
AND CHÈVRE OVER SHALLOT,
WALNUT, AND BEET GREENS
COUSCOUS**

PEACH-RASPBERRY CRUNCH

COOKING NOTES

Fresh raspberries are wonderful in cereals or paired with a dollop of Greek-style yogurt or cream and an indulgent drizzle of maple syrup.

Freeze excess berries to use in smoothies and desserts, or make them into raspberry jam.

If the fruit is to be made into preserves, it

FRUIT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

Linda (not verified) 1 year ago

I just planted raspberries for the first time last year and got about 6 berries off it. They seem to be in a bush form and not many canes and they have little thorny spikes all up and down them. We have to wear gloves to touch them. The plants are spreading very fast and we have them on a fence line. They seem a little out of control as their are no tall canes to tie up. We are in Texas about 35 miles east of Dallas.

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REPLY

Nettie (not verified) 1 year 2 months ago

I am trying to propagate more raspberries with the ones I have. Is it possible to cut some of the canes with beginning of buds to root?

REPLY

Buz Bricca (not verified) 1 year 12 months ago

What mulch would you suggest for raspberries in a very alkaline soil?

REPLY

The Editors 1 year 11 months ago

Hi, Buz. We would suggest that you use straw or sawdust to mulch your raspberries.

REPLY

Buz Bricca (not verified) 1 year 12 months ago

I live at 7000 ft elevation in SW Colorado, grow raspberries, and have clayey soil with a pH of 7.5. What mulch would you suggest, to help prevent dying and to correct for the basic nature of soil here?

REPLY

i planted 15 everbearing type in the spring and they are doing reasonably well. growth has been from 1-3 feet on the plants. even though they will not fruit till next year, should they still be pruned back this winter? thanks

REPLY

The Editors 2 years 7 months ago

Hi Doug, Thanks for the question. So, it depends on if you want your ever-bearing raspberry bushes to produce two crops each year (summer and fall) or just one (fall). In order to get that smaller summer crop next year before the bountiful one in the fall, the fruit will grow on the bottom of this year's canes. If that is the case, leave this year's growth to see what raspberries will appear early in next year's growing season. You can then prune those canes out after harvest. If you just want a single fall crop next fall, the fruit will grow on next year's cane growth, so you can prune out

REPLY

Eric (not verified) 2 years 7 months ago

How long have they been wondering?? :-) "Not only are raspberries perfect for picking and eating straight off the stem, but they're also wonderful in jams, pies and tarts, or smoothies and drinks. "

REPLY

Brian (not verified) 1 year 1 month ago

Ha ha ha! 😄

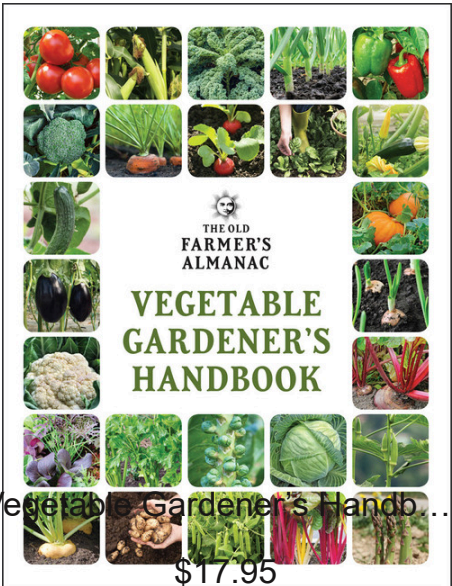
REPLY

Ugly West (not verified) 12 months ago

Ha, ha, ha!

REPLY

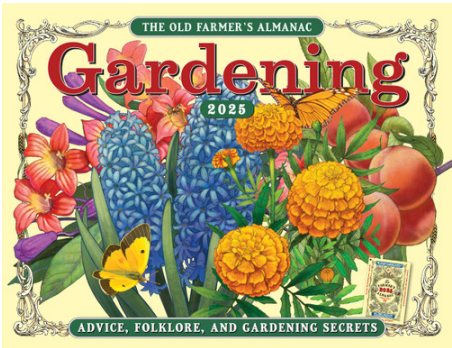
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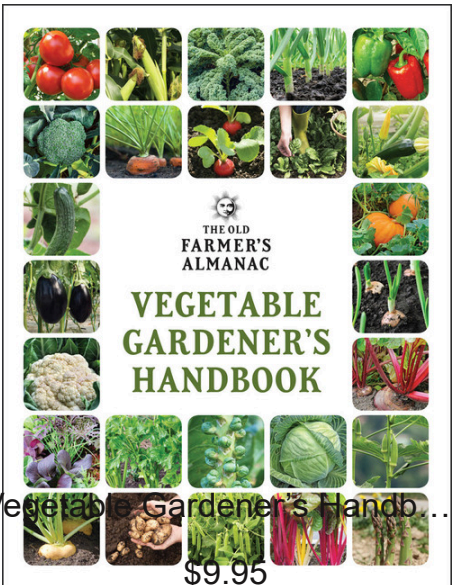
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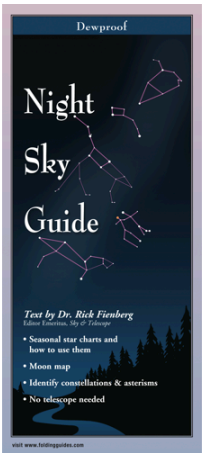
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