

Raspberries

An altogether delicious soft fruit with a refreshing acidic taste. Well suited to growing in a temperate climate the raspberry plant is an easy fruit for the amateur to grow.



Natives of Britain, Europe and Asia, they are often found growing wild in hedges. There are red, yellow and black varieties, the black varieties being most common in the United States.

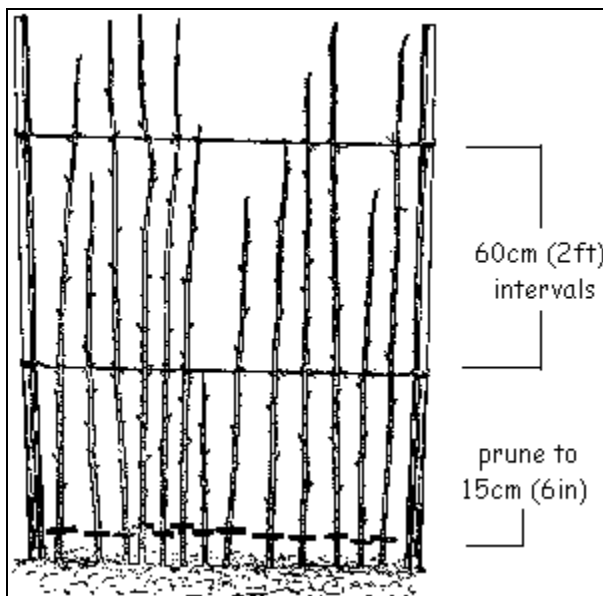
Where To Grow Your Raspberry Cane

The major need for a raspberry plant is a **moist soil**, though heavy clay is not suitable. Light sandy soils are acceptable, as long as you are prepared to water weekly in the warmer summer months. For tip-top results with your raspberry plants the soil should be neutral, although raspberries are better than most plants in moderately acidic soils.

Flowering on raspberry canes occurs late in the season, so protection against frost is not normally a problem. For this reason, areas which may be frost pockets (lower lying land) are likely to be acceptable. Although full sun in a bed running North to South is the ideal position, raspberries grow naturally in woodland areas, so shade for part of the day will not cause problems.

When and How To Plant Raspberries

October is the best month to plant raspberries, although planting can be done any time up to **March** if the weather and soil conditions are correct.



Most soils are suitable for raspberries, but a little preparation will pay rewards, especially because they will remain in the same position for 10 to 12 years. Dig a row 30cm (1ft) deep by 1m (3ft) wide, working in as much well rotted compost as possible. Where more than one row is being planted, allow 1.7m (5ft) between rows in order to let the roots spread freely and give room for you to harvest the crop in summer.

RASPBERRY QUICK GUIDE

Latin Name
Rubus idaeus

Type
Cane Fruit

Site and Soil
Sunny (part shade is OK). Soil well drained, well-dug and composted before planting.

Plant to Harvest Time
2 years

How Many?
2kg (4.5lbs) per plant

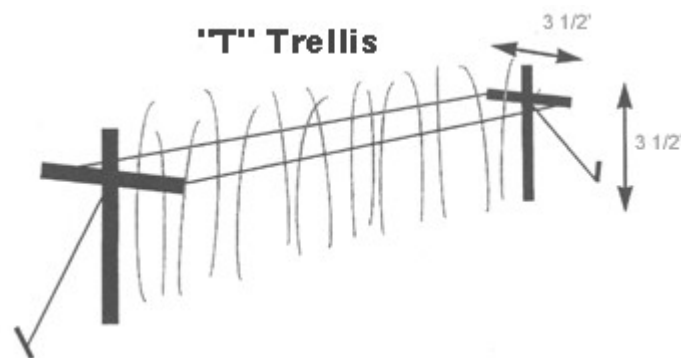
Summer fruiting raspberries (the most common for gardeners) will require support during the growing season. Put the support poles and wires in place after digging, but before planting. Secure two 2.2m (7ft) poles in the ground at either end of the row. Tie two or three horizontal wires at 60cm (2ft) intervals to the poles. Tie the plants loosely to the wires when they begin to grow.

Place the plants in the trench about 45cm (18in) apart, and cover the roots with soil 5cm (2in) above the existing soil mark on the stem. This will encourage more vigorous rooting. Work a handful of bonemeal per square metre (3ft) into the surface of the soil. Firm down the soil by lightly treading it down and water if the soil is not moist.

Finally, cut the plants to 15cm (6in) from the ground as shown in the diagram above. This may seem a bit drastic but if the correct pruning for the first year is not carried out, the plants will be seriously weakened.

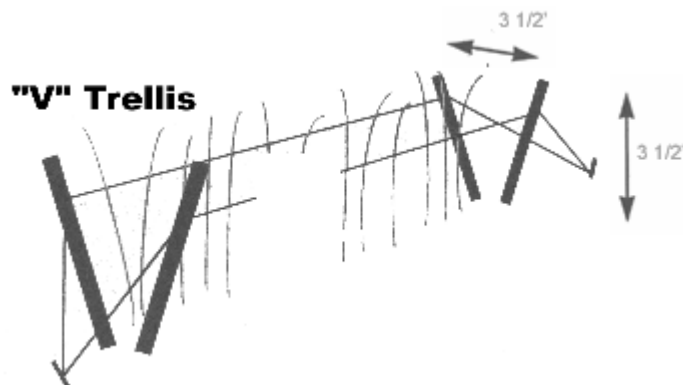
Autumn fruiting raspberries do not require strong supports, and therefore do not need to be planted in rows. Simply devote an area to them and let them grow as they want. The plants will mostly support themselves with only the odd bit of help from some sticks in strategic positions.

Figure 1.



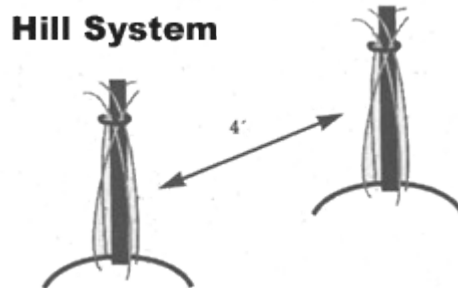
For the **T trellis**, sturdy posts should be set in the row with 3½-foot-long cross arms affixed at a height of 3½ to 4½ feet. The posts should be set at least two feet deep in the ground and anchored at each end of the row. Secure heavy-gauge wire along the length of the row on each side of the cross arms (Figure 1).

Figure 2.



For the **V trellis**, two posts should be set at each end of the row at about a 30-degree angle so that they are 3½ feet apart at a height of 3½ feet. Run the wire from each post at 3½ feet (Figure 2). After pruning, tie the fruiting canes to the wires on each side.

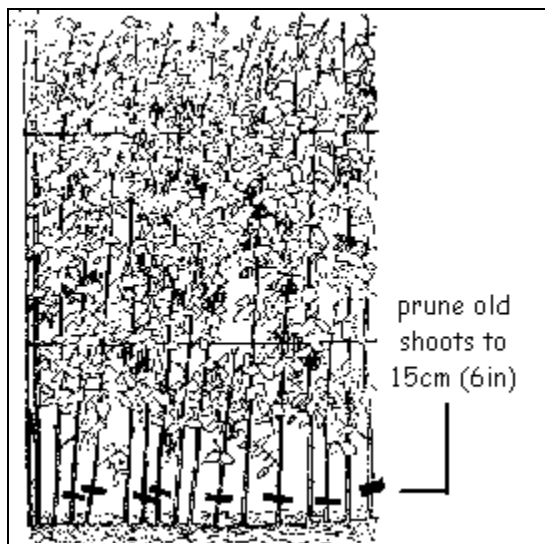
Figure 3.



For black and purple raspberries and blackberries grown using the **hill system**, set a sturdy post next to each plant (four feet apart in the row). A wire can be run along all the posts in the row, about 4½ feet above the ground. The fruiting branches of each plant should be spread along the wire, or the canes of each plant can simply be tied to the post next to them (Figure 3).

Care For Your Raspberries

Summer fruiting raspberry fruits grow from this year's shoots on last year's branches. The aim of the first year's pruning of raspberry canes is to encourage the plants to establish a good root system and prevent them from producing fruits. During June if any fruits appear, pinch them off. If you do this, you will not get any fruit the first summer but the root system will be encouraged to grow well.



For summer fruiting raspberries, prune from the second year onwards by cutting down all of the previous year's branches to 15cm (6in) from the ground as soon as possible after the fruit has been harvested - this will be around July time. Any weak looking new shoots should also be cut down. Tie in the remaining shoots to the support wires as they grow throughout the summer.

Autumn fruiting varieties produce fruit on branches grown this year, Pruning of these consists of cutting all growth to 15cm (6in) from the ground each February.

Pruning of summer fruiting raspberries

Autumn fruiting raspberries are very versatile because as well as pruning in the traditional manner in February, you can also have an earlier crop in early summer if you prune only the top 10 cm (6 in) from some of the canes. These canes will give a much earlier crop but at the same time allow the traditionally pruned canes to push through and crop in autumn.

The plants need a ready supply of water to produce good fruits. Depending on the soil type, watering throughout the summer on a weekly basis may well be needed. All raspberries will appreciate a layer of well rotted compost being applied to the soil in [February](#) each year. Because raspberry roots are very near the surface, do not dig the compost into the soil - this will damage the roots. In the absence of compost, scatter a handful of bone meal to each square metre (3ft).

Raspberry Picking or Harvesting

Raspberries which have been picked do not store well at all - they will only last a day or so. They are also easily damaged during picking and in storage. The best solution is to pick them on the day they are required and do not let them be crushed by their own weight. The fruit does not all ripen at the same time, so harvesting can take place over several weeks.

Raspberries freeze very well. Initially freeze them spread out on a plate or dish to stop them all freezing into a mass. When frozen they can be put in plastic bags or containers and stored in the freezer for a couple of months.

New Raspberries For Free

New growths will spring up from around the base of existing raspberries during the summer.

These should be dug up including some parts of their root system in [October](#) and transplanted to their new place - the chances of success are very high.

Raspberry Diseases

It is recommended that raspberry canes are always sprayed with derris and copper fungicide at the beginning and end of [June](#) to prevent common raspberry diseases.

Raspberry Beetle is a pest where the beetle larvae feed on the berries, leading to badly formed fruit - it becomes dry and shriveled. The larvae fall off after a time, and can be seen on the soil at the base of the plant.

Spur Blight is a fungal infection and is best controlled by regular pruning of overcrowded branches and burning them. The first symptoms are purple areas appearing on the branches in August which quickly turn into silver patches marked with black fungus. If the infection is not prevented, spray with copper fungicide such as Bordeaux mixture (available from most garden centres).

Aphids (several types) often infect raspberries and the only successful course of action is to spray with a good insecticide immediately they are noticed. The varieties 'Malling Orion', 'Malling Delight' and 'Malling Leo' are surprisingly resistant to aphid attacks.

Birds love raspberries, and can be a real problem in some areas where they are numerous. Netting is the only real solution, although there are a variety of 'scaring' mechanisms available at garden centres.

Recommended Raspberry Varieties

All raspberries are self-fertile, so it is not necessary to grow more than one different variety.



Malling Jewel - now the most popular variety because it is resistant to some diseases and forms a neat compact plant which will withstand wind well. It has an excellent flavour.



Fallgold - an unusual variety for several reasons. First, the fruits are golden orange when ripe! The picture on the left was taken when the fruits were fully ripe. They were lovely tasting.

Second, as the name suggests this variety of raspberry is autumn fruiting. The picture on the left was taken towards the end of September in the Midlands.

If you want an unusual raspberry that produces fruit in the Autumn (Fall) that also tastes great then this is for you.

Click the picture to enlarge it.

Glen Cova - bears fruit earlier than most varieties and produces a lot of them. Very tasty.