

# Tayberries

Tayberry is a cultivated shrub of the family rosaceae bred in 1962 from a cross between the Blackberry and the Raspberry at the Scottish Crops Research Institute, Invergowrie, Scotland by David Jennings and David Mason. The fruit is sweeter, much larger and more aromatic than the Loganberry variety. It is grown for its edible fruits which can be eaten raw or cooked to make jam or other dishes, with a cropping period from early July to mid August.

## Where To Grow a Tayberry

Tayberries will grow reasonably well in almost all soils and even in deep shade. Remember though, that tayberry plants may well last for 15 years or so, so do try and start them off in the best possible conditions available.

As far as soil is concerned, they will produce of their absolute best on a medium, well-drained soil which contains plenty of organic matter. They like the soil to hold a good supply of water, especially when the fruits are developing in summer. The worst soil for a Tayberry is light chalky soil - lots of well rotted compost will help to improve these conditions.

Positioning of tayberry canes is a personal matter dependant on your garden. The best berries will be produced when they are in full sun.

Tayberries produce their flowers late in the season so frost will never be a problem. Low lying land or frost pockets are quite suitable for tayberries.

## Soil Preparation

Two or three weeks before planting, dig the soil over and incorporate as much organic matter as possible. The aim is make the soil able to retain the moisture which will see the tayberries through the summer with little or no need for watering.

## When To Plant A Tayberry Cane

The best month to plant tayberry canes is [mid-October](#) - the soil is still warmish, but there is also sufficient moisture in the soil to keep the newly planted canes happy.

If you miss [mid-October](#) , don't worry, any time up to [mid-March](#) is OK as long as the soil is not frozen or water-logged.

## How to Plant A Tayberry Cane

First decide how far apart to plant the canes. This varies considerably depending on the variety being planted. The strong growers should be planted about 4m (13ft) apart. Medium strength growers need to be planted about 2.5m (8ft) apart. The less

### **TAYBERRY QUICK GUIDE**

#### **Latin Name**

Rubus X

#### **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

vigorous growers, need about 1.2m (4ft) between plants. Ask your garden centre for advice if in doubt.

When planting the canes, keep the crown of the roots level with the soil surface. This normally means digging a broad hole about 12cm (5in) deep. Spread the roots out into the hole and cover them in crumbly soil, firming it down with your hand. When planted, water well to provide moisture in the initial stages of growth. Cut the plants back to a good bud about 30cm (12in) high.

Immediately after planting (before if you want), trim the canes to a length of 25cm (10in). It's tempting to leave the canes longer, hoping they will produce fruit next year, but this does not pay off in the long run.

### Supporting and Pruning Tayberries

Tayberries have only three main needs that make support and training important - light, circulating air and removal of last year's fruiting stems.

As far as pruning is concerned, it's simple. As soon as the tayberries have been picked, cut the stems which have produced berries this year to ground level. Don't prune any stems which have not produced fruit this year, they will be the ones which produce tayberries next year. With thorny, strong growing varieties a good pair of gardening gloves (strong trousers and shirt as well, if you have them!) are essential. If you have the time, during [mid-April](#) have a good look at the new stems and cut back maybe 25% of those which are growing very vigorously.

Supporting tayberries is not essential with the stronger growing varieties, although all tayberries appreciate a modicum of support. The idea behind supporting them is to permit a free circulation of air within the plant, thus helping prevent disease in general.

The best way to do this is to put wooden posts into the ground every 2m (6ft) and run wires between them at 70cm (2ft) heights up to 2m (6ft) high. As the new stems grow, tie some of them into the wires. The result will be that some stems will be unsupported and form a natural arch over the ground, whereas others will be tied to the supports and grow slightly higher. This will result in less congestion at the centre, promoting greater circulation of air and exposing much of the plant to the sun. If you have the time to support all the stems, so much the better.

### Care of your Tayberry

Plant your tayberry cane well and it will require little care. Water them when conditions become dry, especially if this occurs when the berries are forming. An annual dressing of well-rotted compost will see them throughout the season. Where compost is not available, use a long lasting fertiliser such as bonemeal. Tayberries are self-fertile and so will produce fruit even if only one plant is grown.

### Harvesting Tayberries

The berries are produced on the previous year's growth, and for this reason, no tayberries will be produced during the first year.

It should be possible to start harvesting the berries in [early July](#) depending on the variety. Most varieties can be harvested from [early August](#) up until [early October](#) if the weather is good.

It's best to pick the fruit little but often to encourage the formation of more fruit. Frequent picking will also reduce the risk of the fruit over-ripening and rotting which will only encourage disease. The best time to pick tayberries is when the weather is dry - wet tayberries do not keep longer than a day before they begin to rot.

### Propagate Your Tayberry

It is an easy job to propagate a tayberry, even for novice gardeners. The best time is around [mid-September](#). Select a stem which is in perfect condition (growing vigorously with no blemishes) and bend its tip to the ground. Where it touches the ground, dig a small hole about 15cm (6in) deep and bury the tip of the stem into the hole. Cover with crumbly soil to the surrounding soil level. If the stem looks like springing out of the hole, place a few largish stones over the soil to keep it in place (remove them two months later). Water well if the conditions are dry.

The stem tips will root in a couple of month's time, and can be dug up and moved to their final position early Spring next year. To do this, sever the parent stem about 30cm (12in) from the new plant. Dig up the new plant, trying to avoid any root disturbance and plant in their new positions.