

# Raspberries

## Soil Requirements

Raspberries prefer a deep, well-drained, fertile soil. Raspberries are deep rooted, and thus need good drainage. Keeping this in mind, raspberries are a very versatile plant, most varieties being hardy in the coldest climates where other cane fruits would fail.

## Fertilizing

Raspberries benefit from high organic content in soils. Organic matter promotes drainage in heavy soils and increases the moisture-holding capacity of sandy soil. Farm manure worked into the soil prior to spring planting, though not essential, is a sound practice. If commercial fertilizers are used, one should apply a well-balanced blend, such as 5-10-5, in early spring. One half cup per hill is usually ample. Another application after harvest is also important.

## Planting

Raspberries should be planted in the spring or late winter. They are usually spaced 2-3 feet in the row with 8-10 feet between the rows. Plant raspberries about one inch deeper than the plant grew in the nursery. The plant, as purchased from the nursery, may be cut back a few inches, as most of the growth will arise from the roots or from the base of the planted cane.

## Pruning

Often only the shoots of suckers that start close to the original plant are allowed to grow, thus the canes are kept grouped together in the so-called hill. However, the home gardener may wish to let the hills grow together, thereby conserving space in the garden. Unwanted suckers arising too far from the mother plant may be grubbed out as they appear.

**Spring Crop** raspberries fruit on two-year-old wood. After harvest, the two year old fruiting wood begins to die and can be removed. The one year old canes that are left can then be thinned the following winter to remove the weaker canes, and those selected to remain for the next summers crop can be cut back to head height. Usually at least seven to ten canes are left per hill.

**Everbearing** raspberries are handled much the same except that they fruit in the fall on one-year-old canes. The fruit will appear on the top foot or so of the cane, and it is a common practice to remove the portion of the cane that fruited after harvest, leaving the rest of the cane to produce next summer's crop. The everbearing raspberry thus produces a summer crop on two-year-old wood and a fall crop on one-year-old wood. As with the spring crop raspberries, the two year old canes die and are removed after the harvest or during the following winter.

## **Training**

Red raspberries can be supported either with tall stakes or ideally with a two-wire trellis. The wires of the trellis are usually placed about one foot below the height at which the canes have been pruned. The wires are placed on each side of the post with large staples or nails. Sometimes crosspieces are nailed to the posts so that the two wires are 12 to 15 inches apart. A second set of wires may sometimes be placed a few feet below the top wires. The canes can be tied to the top set of wires. Certain varieties noted below may need no support at all. *The everbearing raspberries fall into this category.*