

Blackberry and Raspberry Plants

Are you ready for your plants?

Four Important Steps

1. Choosing a Site

When putting in a garden, wind protection, sunlight, drainage, and existing landscaping are all considerations. As a general rule, berries require full sun for ripening. Soil must have good drainage but should also be able to hold some moisture.

Extra Steps:

- Blackberries can also be staked using the hill-method
- Trellising will aid in the ripening and harvest of raspberries

2. Choosing a planting date:

If soil temperatures are above 55° it's okay to plant. Dormant plants are never well suited for summer planting, and most will tolerate some light frost after planting. You must plant within days of picking up your plants.

3. Your Soil pH

- Having your exact soil pH before planting is the most important step. Testing and adjusting your pH to optimum levels is the easiest way to get ready for spring. (Monroe MSU Extension can help you with this).
- A planting in the wrong pH will fail to thrive. Note that any addition of organic material will change the soil pH, especially wood chips, sawdust, leaves or yard clippings. The ideal pH levels for blackberry and raspberry plants is 6.5-6.8.

4. Getting the Ground Ready

- As soon as your soil is dry enough to work, it is a good idea to rake the area free of winter debris and turn the soil. If the soil has never been gardened, thorough and early sod removal is necessary.
- Avoid planting in soils where tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, or raspberries have previously been. These crops may harbor soil pathogens, which may affect your new plants. It is better to start in fresh ground.

Spacing

- ✚ 18" to 24" apart for red and yellow raspberries; 20" – 24" for black raspberries
- ✚ 3' - 4' apart for blackberries
- ✚ Recommended 8' to 12' between rows depending on machinery

Irrigation

- ✚ Soak in water using Agri-gel™ (TerraSorb™ root gel) for 1 to 2 hours before planting
- ✚ Water thoroughly after planting
- ✚ 1" to 2" rainfall or equivalent per week

Fertilization

- ✚ Before planting add ½ to ¾ pounds of 10-10-10 per 100 square feet
- ✚ Commercial growers should use 500 pounds per acre
- ✚ An additional 1 pound of 10-10-10 per 100 square feet can be applied in July of August and in early spring in following years

Weed Control

- ✚ Regular cultivation is necessary during growing season
- ✚ Roots are shallow - don't cultivate more than an inch deep
- ✚ Mulching during establishments can help control weeds
- ✚ Contact MSU Extension for chemical recommendations

Trellis

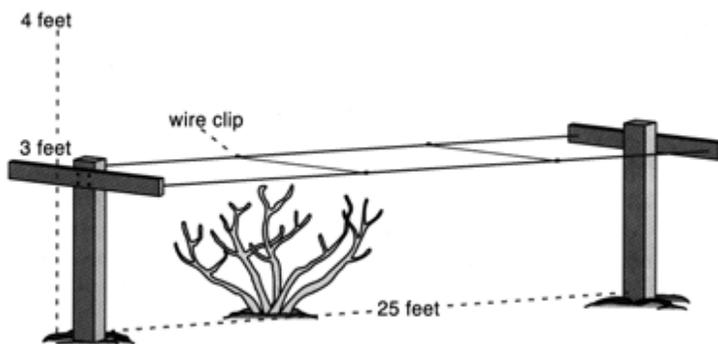
- ✚ We suggest plants are supported by a trellis
- ✚ Trellising keeps canes upright and fruit off the ground
- ✚ A trellis makes picking easier, and maintains good aeration, thereby reducing disease control

Other Tips

You can do pre-fertilization, either with common 10-10-10 type of commercial fertilizer or an organic method, but only use a little bit. Over fertilizing can lead to weak or “burnt” plants, so more is not always better. The advantage of packaged fertilizers is that they are of consistent strength and come with guidelines printed on the label.

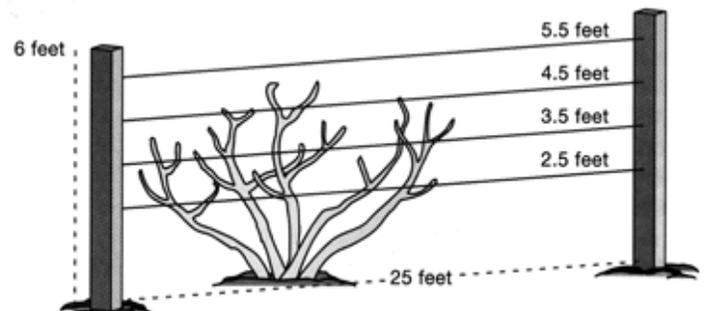
- Do not mulch brambles beyond the first year
- Do not mow down summer-bearing raspberries; they fruit on 2 year-old canes.
- Caution should be taken to prevent the roots from being planted too deep.

Choose a sunny location with deep loamy soil. Heavy silts and clay soils should be avoided because of poor growth and lower yields, or should be formed into raised beds to provide adequate drainage. Good drainage and an adequate supply of moisture are essential.



Summer Raspberry Trellis

T-bar trellis for raspberries that



Black Raspberry & Blackberry Trellis

T-Trellis4-Wire is best trained to a four-wire