

PLANTING & CARE OF BLACKBERRY AND RASPBERRY PLANTS

PRE-PLANTING CARE

Plant as soon as possible after you receive your plants. Keep roots moist. Small orders can go in the crisper of your refrigerator for up to a week, until you are able to plant. Do not store more than seven days, the sooner you plant the more successful your planting will be!

CHOOSE AND PREPARE THE SITE

ATTENTION! *Avoid planting raspberries in soils where previous crops have included strawberries, raspberries, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants or peppers. These crops may harbor soil pathogens, Verticillium, Phytophthora and nematodes that may negatively affect your new plants.*

Site preparation: It is best to have the site prepared and ready for planting prior to planting so that you can plant them upon arrival.

Location: Plant in a sunny, weed-free location that has a minimum of 6-8 hours of sunlight exposure. Early morning sun is preferred. Do not plant near wild plants or near plants whose origin is unknown.

Soil: All berries grow well in a wide variety of well-drained soils. However, the soil should have at least 2-3% organic matter for best growth. If the soil is not well-drained, planting in raised beds may be necessary.

Soil pH & Fertility: Blackberries and raspberries prefer a soil pH of 6-5 - 6.8. You may need to have your soil tested before planting to know your current soil pH and fertility levels.

Spacing: In-row: Raspberries – 12"-18", Blackberries – 3-4'. Between rows: 8'-12'

PLANTING

Plant 1" deeper than they were in the nursery. The soil line around the stem will indicate their nursery depth. Care should be taken so that the hole is wide enough to allow the entire root system to be covered. Use a hoe to make a trench 2" deep the length of the bed. Plant all the roots without cutting by spreading the roots out in the trench and set at about 2" deep at spacings noted above. Plant so they look like this: L L L L Be sure that the soil is packed firmly around the roots. Care should be taken to prevent the roots from being planted too deep.

The fine root system should not be allowed to dry during the planting process. This can happen very quickly on a warm day. Soak the plants for up to 2 hours prior to planting and keeping the plants in a pail of water as you plant. Root dip can also be used to prevent roots from drying. NOTE: Do not soak plants more than 3 hours.

Watering

Water thoroughly after planting. Maintain good soil moisture until plants are well established. Do not water every day. One to three times per week is sufficient. The plants should receive 1"-2" of rainfall or the equivalent each week throughout the season.

Fertilization

Home gardeners should incorporate ½ lb.- ¾ lb. of 10-10-10 fertilizer or similar, per 100 sq. ft. after new plants are well-established. An additional 1 lb. of 10-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. can be applied again in July or August, and in following years, in the early spring.

Weed Control/Mulch

Regular cultivation around plants is necessary during the growing season. Because blackberry and raspberry root systems are shallow, be careful not to cultivate more than an inch deep. Mulching during establishment can also help control weeds. Do not mulch blackberries or raspberries beyond the first year.

AFTER PLANTING CARE

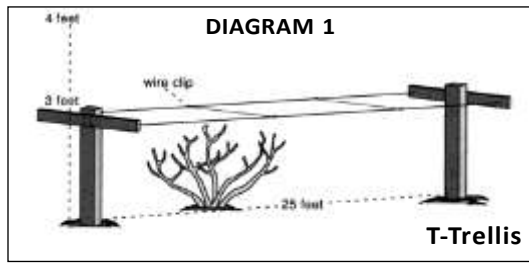
Planting Year Growth

New growth on raspberries may not appear for 4-6 weeks. The cane portion of the plant may never leaf out. Check for root development by gently digging 2"-3" out from the cane of the plant.

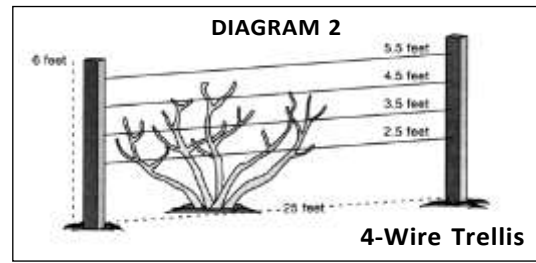
Trellis and Training

Supporting brambles with a trellis is suggested. A trellis keeps canes upright and fruit off the ground, makes picking much easier, and maintains good aeration throughout the planting which helps with disease control. A T-bar trellis for raspberries that supports 2 wires 12" apart at 3'-4' above the ground works well (Diagram 1, below). Blackberries are best trained to a four-wire trellis (Diagram 2, below). Attach the main stems to the wire with a clip or a slightly loose twist ties.

Raspberry Trellis: Top wire 48"-52" tall



Blackberry Trellis

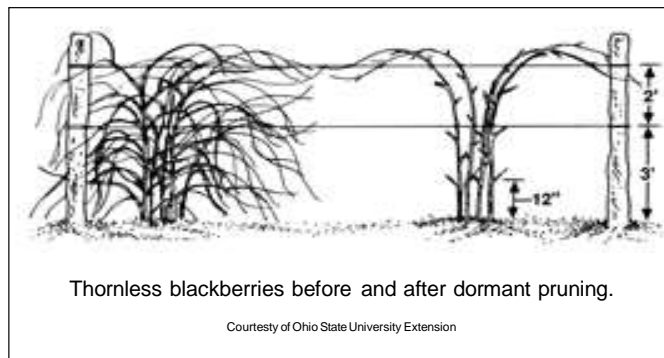


Sometimes thornless blackberries are managed by tying them to a stake. In the staked-hill system, the canes are wrapped around a stake 2" in diameter, tied in 2 to 3 places, and cut off to the height of the stake at 5'- 6' above ground level. The plants are set 5'-8' apart in every direction and restricted to a clump. This is an easy to maintain system and can be an attractive addition to the home garden landscape.

Pruning

Raspberries: For best yields, prune out the canes that carried fruit directly after harvest. Thin remaining new growth to 6-8 strong, healthy canes per running foot of row.

Blackberries: First year canes can be pruned when they reach 5' high in mid-summer. Canes that fruited can be removed any time after they have been harvested. Thin the remaining canes to 6-8 canes per running yard of row. If grown in a hedgerow, thin canes to 6-8 canes per hill. Laterals should be cut back to 12" in late November.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a number of resources on the Web for information on growing and managing brambles. Listed below are a few internet links to several good sources of information. Some are web sites, others are pdf files.

Cornell University Guide to Growing Fruit at Home: information on brambles starts on page 65.
http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/bitstream/1813/67/2/Cornell_Guide_to_Growing_Fruit.pdf

Cornell Berry Diagnostic Tool: If your berry plants look sick.
fruit.cornell.edu/berrytool/index.html

Michigan State University Extension Web Site

<http://msue.anr.msu.edu/> - type blackberries or raspberries in the "Search This Site" box at the top of the page.