

Cultivation of Raspberries:

Raspberries thrive in moisture-retentive, fertile, slightly acidic soils, which are well-drained and weed free. They dislike waterlogged soils and shallow chalky soils. For the best results, plant in a sheltered, sunny position; although they will tolerate part shade.

In early March apply slow-release general fertiliser, fish, blood and bone for example, at 34g per sq m (1oz per sq yd), then mulch with well-rotted organic matter. If the growth is weak, apply sulphate of ammonia at 34g per sq m (1oz per sq yd) or dried poultry manure pellets at 100g per sq m (3oz per sq yd).

Keep raspberries well watered during dry periods.

Planting

Raspberries can be planted any time during the dormant season, between November and March, providing the soil is not frozen or waterlogged.

Raspberries are usually planted in rows and trained along a post and wire system. But, if you have a smaller garden, you can still grow raspberries, either in containers, or train them up a single post (see below for more on training techniques).

Before planting, dig at least one bucketful of well-rotted organic matter per square yard into the soil and fork in slow release general fertiliser at 100g per sq m (3oz per sq yd)

Plants should be 45-60cm (18in-2ft) apart, and if planting in rows, space the rows 1.8m (6ft) apart, ideally running north to south, so that they do not shade each other

Prune the canes to within 25cm (10in) of the ground after planting

Pruning

Regular annual pruning will result in healthier plants, and better quality crops.

Summer-fruiting raspberries

Cut back fruited canes to ground level immediately after harvesting; **do not** leave old stubs;

Select the strongest young canes, around six to eight per plant, and tie them in 8-10cm (3-4in) apart along the wire supports

Remove the remaining young stems to ground level as for pruning fruited wood

Autumn-fruiting raspberries

Cut back all the canes to ground level in **February**. Reduce the number of 'newly formed' canes slightly in summer if there is very overcrowding.

Container growing

Single raspberry plants can be grown in 38cm (15in) diameter containers of 80 percent multipurpose compost and, to add weight for stability, 20 percent loam-based potting compost, training the canes up bamboo poles. Keep the compost moist (using rainwater in hard water areas) and feed with a liquid general-purpose fertiliser on a monthly basis during the growing season.

Training - Single fence

This system is ideal for summer-fruiting raspberries in a small garden.

Drive 2.5m (8ft) long and 75mm (3in) diameter posts into the ground to a depth of 75cm (30in) at 5m (15ft) intervals

Stretch 12 gauge (3.5mm) galvanized wire between the posts at 60cm (2ft) vertical intervals

Plant the summer-fruiting raspberries and tie in the canes along one side of the wires

Keep fruiting canes on one side and young new canes to the other side of the wires as the season progresses. In autumn, the fruited canes can easily be pruned out and the young canes will be separate along the other side of the wire

Single fence with parallel wires

This system is well suited to autumn-fruiting raspberries and increases yield in a small space for summer-fruiting raspberries. Tying in of canes is not necessary. Picking is more difficult, and there is a greater chance of fungal problems in the more crowded conditions.

Drive 2.5m (8ft) long and 75mm (3in) diameter posts into the ground to a depth of 75cm (30in) at 5m (15ft) intervals

Attach two short horizontal lengths of timber to each post, one at the top, and one 60cm (2ft) below

Stretch 12 gauge (3.5mm) galvanized wire in parallel lines along the ends of the horizontal lengths of timber to create two parallel lengths of wire along the fence

Stretch thin wire or garden twine between the parallel galvanized wires as cross ties, every 60cm (2ft) along

The raspberry canes do not need tying in, as they will be supported by the parallel wires and cross ties

Single post - This system is ideal for the very small garden.

Drive a 2.5m (8ft) long and 75mm (3in) diameter post into the ground to a depth of 75cm (30in)

Plant two or three plants around the base and tie in the canes with garden twine.