

Raspberry Planting and Care

Grow raspberries in a part of the garden that has good air circulation, good drainage and full sunlight.

Good air movement helps leaves dry faster, which reduces disease problems. Standing water will increase the likelihood of disease problems and death of the plants due to a lack of oxygen to the roots.

Any well-drained soil is good for growing raspberries. Irrigation will be needed on a sandy soil, and even on more moisture-retentive soils during dry spells.

Raspberry canes are sensitive to drying out, so avoid planting in a very windy spot.

Raspberries begin to bloom in late May or early June. Bumblebees, honeybees, and other wild bees are excellent pollinators of brambles. The more bees working your planting, the more fruit you will harvest.

Planting raspberries in a row along a fence or wall makes them easy to manage and, best of all, easy to pick. Or you can grow your raspberries in more of a rounded patch. Either way, space red or yellow raspberry plants every 2 to 3 feet.

Whether you're planting bare-root or potted plants, the key is to keep the crown of the plant 1 or 2 inches above the ground.

Dig a hole based on the size of the root mass

When you place the plant in the hole spread out the roots.

Try not to wrap the roots around in the hole.

If any roots are particularly long or unruly, they can be trimmed off.

If planting a potted plant, make sure to loosen the root ball and cut any tightly wound roots. This will help the roots spread better once planted in the ground.

Watering

Raspberries need lots of water from spring until after harvest. Because the root system is in the top two feet of soil, watering regularly is better than an occasional deep soaking.

Raspberries need 1 to 1.5 inches of water per week from flowering until harvest. Use a rain gauge or check reported rainfall, and irrigate accordingly.

Fertilizer and mulch

Raspberry plants are heavy feeders and generally need to be fertilized. Composted manure is a good source of nutrients and can be incorporated prior to planting at a rate of 3 1/2 cubic feet per 100 sq. feet, to improve soil structure and provide nutrients.

On established plantings, apply the same rate for continued plant nutrition.

Raspberries enjoy a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch. Good mulches for use in the home garden include leaves, lawn clippings, and wood chips or shavings because they are usually free of weed seeds.