

# Growing Guide for Raspberries and Blackberries

Raspberry and blackberries (brambles) are popular fruits that are relatively easy to grow in the garden. Bramble fruits are not only delicious, but full of antioxidants and other healthy compounds, too.

---

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Light</b>         | Full sun, no less than 8 hours:  |
| <b>Soil: (pH)</b>    | most soil types that are well drained (sensitive to poorly drained soil)<br>pH 5.5-6.5 |
| <b>Zone:</b>         | 5-8  |
| <b>Moisture:</b>     | 1 inch water/ week during growing season   |
| <b>Fertilizer:</b>   | 1 application of well-balanced fertilizer and compost applied in spring                |
| <b>Plant Height:</b> | 4-6'   |
| <b>Pollination:</b>  | Self pollinating   |

---

## Varieties

### Raspberries

**Anne** everbearing yellow  
**Kokanee** fall red  
**Caroline** fall red  
**Fall Gold** fall gold  
**Heritage** fall red  
**Jacklyn** everbearing red  
**Joan J** fall red  
**Polana** summer red everbearing  
**Meeker** fall black  
**Vintage** everbearing red  
**Bristol** mid- season black  
**Jewel** early black  
**Raspberry Shortcake** summer, thornless

---

### Blackberries

**Black Satin** thornless  
**Baby Cakes** thornless  
**Chester** thornless  
**Triple Crown** thornless

## Plant Care

Prepare the soil at least a year before planting, especially if pH and nutrient levels need to be adjusted. This is determined by a soil test. Control weeds before planting to reduce competition for nutrients and moisture. Brambles will grow in a wide range of soils, but not in poorly drained types. Raspberries and blackberries are shallow rooted and will need plenty of moisture during the growing season. Plan to apply additional water if rainfall is below an inch per week. Brambles are plants that have a perennial root system with biennial top growth (primocanes and floricanes; the exception being fall bearing raspberries). Brambles also fall into two categories: summer bearing and fall bearing types (which produce fruit on the tips of the first-year canes and the lower half of the floricanes the following summer). It is also important to understand the growth habit of the varieties that are being grown since it will determine how you will prune them. Some type of support system should be in place for most varieties.

### Pruning

The goal of pruning brambles is to obtain plenty of high-quality fruit. Pruning will allow better light penetration and good air circulation within the row. Pruning also promotes early and more uniform ripening.

#### Summer Bearing Raspberries

Red, black, purple, some yellow raspberries, and blackberries are considered summer bearing, and bear fruit on 2-year canes (floricanes).

Remove the dead floricanes (fall-winter) and thin the remaining primocanes (vegetative) to 6-8 " apart; keep only the healthiest canes (should be thicker than a pencil) in March. Keep the row width no wider than 18" and tip (cut back) the canes to 40-60" to promote lateral branching.

#### Fall Bearing Raspberries

Fall bearing raspberries are allowed to grow throughout the summer and are harvested in late summer until the first frost. Mow all canes to 2-3" from the ground and narrow row width 12-18". Canes may be tipped back to promote lateral growth.

#### Blackberries

Blackberries tend to form clumps, so maintaining rows is challenging; it may be easier to grow them in a group of 4-5 plants.

Tip the primocanes during the summer to promote lateral growth. Remove the dead floricanes in fall-winter. Thin the remaining canes, removing weak, spindly growth, and leave 5-10

strong canes/plant (March). Trim the lateral growth on each cane to 6-8" (March). Tip the canes to maintain a reasonable height for harvest.

## **Fertilizer**

Apply 5 pounds of 10-10-10 per 100 linear feet of row or close equivalent (Pro Gro is also a good choice) the first year and no more than 10 pounds per 100 feet in following years. Apply fertilizer only in the early spring before flowering and apply over the plants. Be careful not to work into the soil since the shallow roots may be damaged. Brambles respond well to applications of compost or well rotted manure.

## **Insects and Diseases**

Fruit rot and various insects are common problems with brambles. Monitoring for these pests and using cultural practices that allow good air circulation will help reduce these problems. Another option is to spray fungicides and insecticides or use a combination fungicide and insecticide such as Bonide Fruit and Nut Spray to reduce or eliminate pest problems. Remember to read the label and not to spray during bloom to protect pollinators.

## **Harvest, Storage and Use**

Berries will not continue to ripen once picked, so they should be harvested by intended use. To eat fresh from the plant, they are the most flavorful when they stain your fingers from the juice of the fresh berries. If you intend on baking or storing them for a few days, you should pick them earlier, when you need to give them a slight tug to remove them from the canes. Overall, the size, color and ease of removing them are all indicators of ripeness. Once harvested, they will only keep for a few days, at a cool temperature with moderately high humidity. Berries are great eaten fresh, on yogurt, turned into jams and jellies, or in baked desserts.

For more detailed information, use the following link:

[https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource00010\\_Rep10.pdf](https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource00010_Rep10.pdf)  
[https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource007472\\_Rep10777.pdf](https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource007472_Rep10777.pdf)

