REEMS CREEK NURSERY

Raspberries / Rubus

A Garden Guide



Raspberries are delicious and easy to grow, an excellent addition to edible gardens here in WNC. Raspberries are also very nutritious, high in Vitamin C, soluble fiber, and a variety of nutrients. They are perennial plants, meaning their roots and crowns survive for years. Their canes, however, are short-lived. New canes are produced every year.

Although Raspberries are self-pollinating, for best production and fruit quality, **plant at least two different varieties**.

Varieties: Everbearing types have two crops per year, one in summer and one in fall. Everbearing varieties produce fruit on the primocane tips, usually in September of the first year. The second year they produce berries on lower portions of floricane that had not fruited the previous season.

Newer thornless varieties are available, they are tasty and easier to harvest. There are also new dwarf types that can be grown in containers - while the plants stay small, the fruits are large - perfect for those with space constraints.

Siting: Raspberries need full sun (6-8 hours of direct sunlight). Selecting a spot with good airflow, but not excessive winds, will help keep plants healthy. Wild berries can carry diseases. Remove any within 100 ft of planting site.

Planting: Raspberries need rich, well-draining soil, with a pH of 5.6-6.2. A good soil test will tell you exactly what to add, but usually in our soils, raspberries will need at least 1/3rd soil conditioner, up to 1/3rd rich composts, mixed with our native clay. We carry numerous excellent organic soil amendments suitable for growing them, such as composted cow manure, fish emulsion, worm castings, and more.

Prior to planting, deeply water or soak the roots. This can be done while you're preparing the planting area. Applying mycorrhizae directly to the roots, during the planting process, will improve overall plant health and resilience.

Plant raspberries 4' apart. Dig a hole 2-3x the width of the pot, but no deeper than the pot. Gently loosen and untangle the roots, and plant the raspberries to the same depth as they were in the original pot. Install trellis now (or soon), mulch generously, and water deeply. A 2-3" layer of mulch will help conserve moisture, deter weeds, and



slowly improve soil health. We also carry different types of mulch, such as pine mulch and pine straw, which are suitable for raspberries. If planting multiple plants, it's easier to dig a trench.

Fertilizing: Work in organic composts or Plant Tone when new growth appears in spring, and post harvest. Compost tea is a wonderful snack for your plants during the growing season.

Watering: Slowly, deeply, and once weekly during the first growing season. Supplemental water will be needed during dry periods - drought can compromise fruit production. Less water will be needed during rainy periods. Remember, too much or too little water can cause significant health issues.

Pruning: The first year, fertilize the plants in May after new growth starts, and again in July. In subsequent years, fertilize in March and again in May. Remove suckers from the base of the plant as needed. If they have roots, they can be replanted and added to your raspberry collection. Remove old brown stems that have fruited. Leave green stems. Tie remaining stems to trellis or fence. To help prevent winter damage, during the dormant season untie stems and mulch plants heavily.

Harvesting: Check plants every several days for ripe berries, which will easily be removed. It is best to harvest during cool times of the day, preferably when plants are dry. Assuming your raspberries have not been treated with a pesticide, do NOT wash after harvesting, unless you will be eating them immediately. Raspberries do not keep for long.



Raspberries can be turned into jams, jellies, slushies, ice cream, pies, juices, smoothies, ferments - countless delicious options!

Trellising: There are different kinds to trellis systems that can be constructed. Each style has pros and cons, but overall they make it easier to manage plants, easier to harvest, improve air flow, and thereby improve plant health. Ideally they will be installed prior to planting, although it is also manageable while plants are still small and young. For an excellent guide on trellising, see the NCSU Cooperative Extension Service publication "Trellis Systems".

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