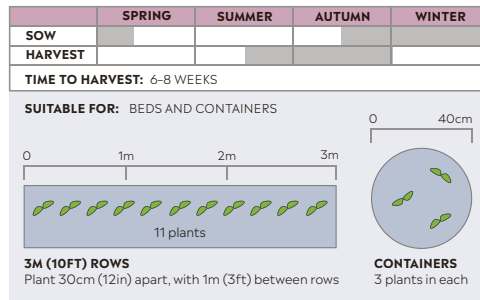


STEP-BY-STEP

# RASPBERRIES

You could be forgiven for thinking that raspberries demand a lot of space - visit any allotment and you'll see row after row of canes. However, for the majority of people these will yield too much fruit. Raspberries are easy to grow: just a few canes on a small plot will produce a rewarding crop, and modern "dwarf" varieties are now available. By choosing summer- and autumn-fruiting varieties, you'll be able to enjoy sweet berries from midsummer right through to the first frosts.



## 1 GETTING STARTED

Summer-fruiting raspberries crop from mid- to late summer; autumn varieties fruit from late summer to mid-autumn, so plant both for the longest harvest. Summer raspberries should be planted against horizontal wires held 40cm (16in) and 80cm (32in) above the soil. Autumn-fruiting varieties can be grown free-standing.



'Polka' is a disease-resistant, nearly spine-free, variety that bears delicious, sweet berries.

'Cascade Delight' is a free-fruiting summer raspberry, with large, rich-tasting berries.

'Tulameen' fruits in summer over several weeks, and is a good choice for cooler areas.

'All Gold' crops in autumn, producing tasty yellow fruits that won't stain your fingers.



Plant new canes in evenly spaced rows and provide suitable support for summer-fruiting varieties. Water and mulch after planting.



New shoots develop in spring after which the original woody cane can be cut to the ground. This will encourage further new canes to develop.

## 2 PLANTING

New canes are best planted in late autumn, although planting in winter and early spring is also an option. Canes are generally sold bare-root or root-wrapped - lifted from the ground and bundled together loosely in compost. They prefer moist, free-draining soil, and will tolerate a little shade. Dig well-rotted organic matter into the soil in autumn, allowing it to settle for two weeks before planting. Space the canes 30cm (12in) apart in rows at least 1m (3ft) apart.

**TIP** Raspberries are easy to grow in large tubs, especially compact varieties.

## 3 ROUTINE CARE

Keep plants well watered during summer and apply a tomato feed to promote a good harvest. Mulch near the base of the canes with composted organic matter to help retain moisture. As soon as the fruit starts to ripen, protect it from birds. Cover plants with a cage or use netting, held taut using canes to prevent snaring birds.



Water the plants once or twice a week during summer, even daily on light soils during dry spells. Avoid splashing the stems, which spreads disease.



Birds soon attack summer raspberries but are less interested in autumn-fruiting varieties, which crop as other wild berries become abundant.

## 4 HARVESTING

The berries are ready as soon as they turn fully red or yellow, depending on the variety, and pull easily from the plant leaving the central "plug" behind. Avoid picking on rainy days as wet fruit does not store well. Check your plants daily to ensure you harvest them at the perfect point of ripeness.



Handle the berries carefully when picking as they are easily damaged. Squashed fruits quickly spoil so are best eaten straightaway.

## 5 SUMMER PRUNING

Summer-fruiting raspberries are pruned straight after the last fruits have been harvested, cutting the fruited canes to the base. Younger, unfruited stems, produced that summer, should be tied to the wires in their place. Keep only the strongest and tie them in 10cm (4in) apart, to fruit next year.



After pruning summer varieties, tie the new shoots onto horizontal wires. These will fruit the following year, then be replaced by new growth.

## 6 WINTER PRUNING

Autumn raspberries are pruned in winter by cutting all the canes down to the ground. Alternatively, to encourage a staggered harvest the following year, cut a few canes down by only half their height in winter. The half-height canes will then produce an earlier crop in early to midsummer. These fruited canes can then be pruned out completely after harvesting.



Cut autumn-fruiting canes closely to the ground. New shoots will appear in late spring.

