

Berry Planting Guide

Delicious berries are a summertime staple snack and dessert. Grow your own!

BLACKBERRIES

This is the most heat tolerant berry and best adapted to our California climate. They require full sun for best fruit production.



There are several types of blackberries:

- **Semi erect** have stiff and longer canes. Examples of these include: *Black Satin* & *Triple Crown*.
- **Trailing** blackberries have canes that require support. Varieties include: '*Boysen*', '*Marion*' and *Olallieberry*.
- **Dwarf** - The *Baby Cakes* variety grows to only 3-4 feet and has an upright and rounded habit. It doesn't require additional support and is the perfect blackberry if you don't have a lot of space.

Planting

If possible, blackberry plants should be planted in winter into early spring.

They do well planted in a variety of soil types (including our local clay), however, they do prefer well drained soil that is slightly acidic with a pH level of 5.5-7.0. Plant them in raised beds or directly in the ground. Pots (including large containers such as a half wine barrel) are generally too small for a blackberry bush as blackberry roots have a 3 foot spread. If you want to plant a blackberry bush in a pot or small space it's best to choose a dwarf variety such as *Baby Cakes*.

Avoid planting blackberries too deeply in the soil. They should be planted at the same depth as they were in the nursery sleeve or pot. Water well before you plant and once in the ground. Apply mulch around your blackberries to prevent weeds.

If you are planting a row of blackberries, space them 2-4 feet apart with 8-10 feet between rows.

Irrigation

Blackberry plants require irrigation that keeps their soil moist at all times. As with many plants, ensure that the soil does not become saturated as this will rot the roots. This is particularly true if planting a blackberry sleeve. These plants have no leaves (until the spring) and therefore only require limited water to keep them hydrated until they leaf out. With colder temperatures, they may only require watering once every two weeks and not at all if there is regular rainfall.

When temperatures are high or when the fruit is ripening, blackberries may need to be watered daily.

Fruit Production

Blackberries are self fruitful. However, you will get an increase in fruit production if you plant more than one variety. In their first year of planting all blackberries only produce vegetative growth. Thereafter, fruit production depends on the variety.

In the second year flowers and fruit are produced on these canes which then dry out and die. New canes emerge every year from the crown area.



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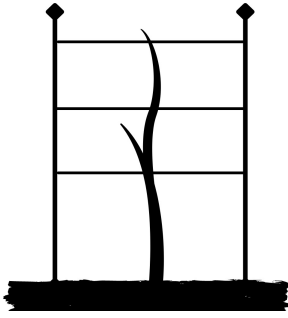
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Berry Planting Guide (cont'd)

Trellising and Pruning

We recommended providing trellising for all blackberries to keep the plants neater and easier to harvest. A 2-3 foot wide wire trellis about 6 feet tall is normally sufficient, with wires pegged at 2, 4 and 6 feet apart.



A dwarf blackberry bush doesn't require support.

There are two names for a blackberry cane, depending on whether the cane is in its first or second year of growth:

- **Primocanes:** First year of growth: most types produce no fruit on these canes. Primocanes don't produce flowers or fruit and may have a flush of new growth at the tip, they may also tend to grow on the ground.
- **Floricanes:** Second year of growth; these canes produce flowers and fruit and then die. Floricanes produce blossoms in the spring and berries in early to midsummer.

A helpful hint for identifying the type of cane is that the floricanes will have remnants of bloom/berry clusters.

RASPBERRIES

Raspberries are more suited to cooler California coastal areas, but have performed well in the Valley. The *Baba* variety can be grown in hotter inland regions.

There are four groups of raspberries: red (the most common), golden yellow, black and purple. Red varieties can be divided into summer bearing and fall bearing. Summer bearing ones are the most common. They produce primocanes canes one year which develop into fruit bearing floricanes the following year. *Canby* is a popular summer bearing variety we carry.



Fall bearing berries produce canes that bear fruit on the top portion of the current season's growth in late summer and fall. If their canes are left to overwinter they will bear fruit the following spring on the lower portion of the cane that did not bear fruit the previous spring. Varieties include *Heritage*, *Caroline* and *Baba*.

Alden Lane sells the fall bearing *Fall Gold* - a golden yellow raspberry. Black raspberries such as *Jewel* produce fruit on arched or trailing canes. Unlike other raspberries, new canes develop from old canes rather than the plant roots.

Raspberry Shortcake is a red dwarf bush variety. It only reaches 2-3 feet in height and width.



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Planting

Raspberries plants can be planted anytime from late fall into Spring. Most raspberry varieties do not perform well in heavy clay soil but prefer well drained soil. A soil amendment such as **Bumper Crop** or an acid soil mix can be added to the soil to improve drainage. They are best grown in raised beds or directly in the ground with a soil pH between 5.5-6.5. By adding soil sulfur, we can buffer the pH to be just right. Start by doing a simple pH test to fine tune.

Like blackberries, avoid planting raspberries too deeply in the soil. They should be planted at the same depth as they were in the nursery sleeve or pot. Water well before you plant and once in the ground. Apply mulch around your raspberries to prevent weeds.

Irrigation

Raspberries like to be kept moist, but not saturated. When it's extremely hot and /or windy, increase watering, especially when the plants are fruiting. Avoid overhead irrigation systems as these encourage fruit rot and leaf rust.

Trellising and Pruning

Generally raspberry canes require support to keep them upright. A 6-7 foot wire trellis support is sufficient. A dwarf raspberry plant doesn't need much, if any, support.

Summer bearing red raspberries should have their fruiting (floricanes) removed after harvest. During the dormant season remove all weak and damaged canes, leaving the strongest. These should be shortened to about 6 feet and tied into the trellis.

Fall bearing raspberries produce fall and summer crops. In the winter when plants are dormant, cut all canes to ground level. The new canes emerging in the spring will produce fruit that summer. If you leave these canes to overwinter, they will produce a second crop of fruit the following spring on the lower portion of these canes.

A dwarf raspberry plant like *Raspberry Shortcake* should have its dead canes removed in late spring. After harvest, prune to ground older canes that have fruited, leaving one-year-old canes to produce the next season's crop

BLUEBERRIES

California's climates allow us to grow some Northern and some Southern highbush blueberries. There has been a flood of blueberry cultivars in recent years making it possible for multiple variety plantings to extend the harvest season and get better cross pollination. Harvest is typically in June followed by a second flush of growth in August.



Some basic rules of thumb are:

- The larger the fruit, the milder the flavor.
- The earlier the harvest, the less problems with heat.
- Wait a few days after the fruit turns blue. The underside of the berry will turn from pink to blue when it is fully ripe.
- Harvest only when the weather is dry & avoid over handling to preserve the whitish, waxy surface to protects it from fruit molds.



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Exposure

Blueberries do best in a sunny morning location and well drained, acidic soil. Blueberries need some mid day and afternoon shade to keep the foliage healthy, but will not fruit in deep shade. They may tolerate a very hot, sunny spot if you give them a plentiful supply of water.

Planting

They are ideally grown in large pots or raised beds and need to be allowed 25 square feet per plant (5x5) although they may be planted closer for high density.

Blueberries need acid soil – a range of pH 4.8 to 5.5. To acidify existing soil: Apply 1-2 pounds of soil sulfur per 25 square feet to the planting area well before you plan to plant. Incorporate it completely into the soil. You will probably need to add more sulfur every third year due to our Valley's alkaline, hard water. If you are planting in a pot or raised bed, use an acid soil mix (Like our **EB Stone Azalea, Camellia, Acid Mix**).

It is important to mulch around the drip line (to preserve moisture and discourage weeds) and amend the soil with lots of organic matter.

Irrigation

They require even moisture and good drainage – roots are very susceptible to standing water.

Pruning

Is usually pretty minimal for blueberries and takes place in winter dormancy. Simply refresh the plant by removing two or three of the oldest canes each year. Do not prune blueberries to shape in late summer or fall as this is when flower and fruit buds are forming for next year. Prune for shape immediately after harvest, before the August growth flush.

Birds

Blueberries often disappear from the plant just when they are ripe because birds love blueberries too, and they will eat your entire crop if you let them. Bird netting works!

Time to Maturity

It takes 2-3 years for blueberries to establish and mature. You'll enjoy bigger crops as they age.

Varieties by Expected Ripening Time

When fruit ripens varies by a number of factors (weather, planting location, soil, etc.), but this chart will give you an idea of when to expect blueberries to ripen.

Early Season (May-June)	Mid Season (June-July)	Late Season (July-August)
<i>Jubilee</i> <i>Jewel</i> <i>Misty</i> <i>O'Neal</i> <i>Sharpblue</i>	<i>Emerald</i> <i>Reveille</i> <i>Southmoon</i>	<i>Jelly Bean</i> <i>Peach Sorbet</i> <i>Pink Lemonade</i> <i>Sunshine Blue</i>

Bountiful Blue is a powerhouse that produces spring through fall.



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