

# Cane Berries

*Planting & Growing Guide*

## Introduction

Blackberries, Black Raspberries, Red Raspberries and Yellow Raspberries are very closely related. Botanists separate the Raspberries from Blackberries by determining if the core stays in the ripe fruit (Blackberries) or if the core is lost and resembles a thimble (Raspberries) during picking. A few berries are a cross between Blackberries and Raspberries, including Boysenberries and are called Trailing Blackberries. All bear fruit on two-year-old wood, except Everbearing Raspberries, which also fruit on first year growth. Everbearing raspberries are not truly everbearing; they bear a late summer or fall crop on the first year's growth and a second crop the following spring on two year old wood.

## Heeling In

When your Bare Root stock arrives, open the plastic bags immediately. It is best to plant right away, within a week of delivery. If you cannot plant right away, you may "heel in" the plants to protect them and keep them alive (but still dormant) until planting in the permanent spot.

To heel in Bare Root plants *outside*, pick a location that is shielded from wind. Dig a trench about twice as deep as the roots are long, with one side of the trench sloping at a 45 degree angle. Place the plants, roots side down, so that the trunks/stems are supported by the sloping side. Cover the roots with soil or sand and gently tamp down to avoid air pockets. Periodically check the root area, keeping the soil moist.

To heel in Bare Root plants *inside* due to snow or frozen ground outside, you can store them in a cool place like a root cellar, basement, or garage. It's important choose a place where the temperature stays between *38 and 45 degrees F*. This is important so the plants neither suffer frost damage, nor break dormancy. Place the roots in a container with soil or sand and be sure to keep the root area moist.

## Cultural Requirements

Remember that after flowering and fruiting, any cane that bore fruit dies back to the crown. When establishing a new planting, it is very important to cut the top back on the bare-root transplants if this has not already been done at the Nursery. All the new growth that will arise from the transplant will come from primary buds just below the soil surface. If you examine the crown of the plant, you will see 2–5 small buds or shoots just above the roots at the base of the crown. All the top growth above the primary buds is the cane that grew in the Nursery row the previous summer and is now two years old and programmed to flower and fruit. If you leave this 2-year-old top growth intact, it will start blooming and try to fruit at the expense of the new cane growth that you are trying to encourage from the primary buds. Without a properly established root system, the newly transplanted berry may dry out in an attempt to ripen fruit on the excess cane. By cutting the tops back, your transplants will have a much better survival rate and better growth will result. Any transplant will experience some stress. By cutting back your bare root canes, less stress will occur.

Once the plant comes out of dormancy in Spring, it takes 4–6 weeks for new growth to show; leave 3–5 inches of the old top above the ground to "mark the plant" in the row.

**Trailing Blackberries** thrive in most soil types but good drainage is desirable. Soils that are naturally fertile, easily worked and retain moisture well, are the most suitable.

**Blackberries** prefer a loose textured, well-drained soil. Avoid sites with a high water table where water sits for long periods of time, especially during winter months. Blackberries will thrive in most soil types and are cold hardy in most areas of the United States.

**Raspberries** prefer a deep, well-drained, fertile soil. Raspberries are deep rooted and need good drainage. Raspberries are very versatile and hardy in the coldest climates where other cane fruits fail.

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**Fertilizer and irrigation** should be avoided until the primary buds force and new canes begin to grow.

**Trailing Blackberries** respond extremely well to balanced organic fertilizers applied at blossom time. Good soil moisture should be maintained by irrigation for the first year after planting and fruit production will increase if irrigation is continued until the fall rains in following years.

**Blackberries** prefer a naturally fertile soil with high organic matter. Apply a well-balanced organic fertilizer in early spring. Plants should be watered moderately during the growing season.

**Raspberries** benefit from high organic matter soils. Organic matter provides drainage in heavy soils and increases the moisture-holding capacity of sandy soils. Work compost into the soil prior to planting and supplement with a well-balanced organic fertilizer after new growth begins in spring.

### Planting Instructions

Soak the roots of the bare root canes in water for an hour or so prior to planting. Plant the root system intact if possible, but if the planting hole is smaller than the root system, prune the roots to fit rather than “wad” them in the planting hole. Avoid over-watering while the plant is dormant; over-watering can lead to root rot. Berries will die in mud! Normally, spring soil moisture is adequate for growth if the root system was soaked prior to planting. Planting berries an inch deeper than they grew in the nursery row is misinformation; they should be planted at the same depth that they grew in the nursery row, covering any white sprouts arising from the crown.

**Trailing Blackberries:** Plant in late winter to early spring.

Avoid pruning the roots of thorn less varieties as this may encourage thorny suckers. Plant 6–8 feet apart and train them on a trellis.

**Blackberries:** Plant in late winter to early spring. The older stems or tops of the transplants can be cut back several inches. Space 3–4 feet apart in the row and 6–8 feet between rows.

**Raspberries:** Plant in spring or late winter. Space 2–3 feet apart with 10 feet between the rows. Cut back a few inches, as most of the growth will arise from the roots or from the base of the planted cane.

**Pruning** For more information on pruning and training of berries, see *Fruits and Berries for the Home Garden*, by Lewis Hill, offered in the book section of the current Peaceful Valley Farm Supply catalog.

### Dormant Nursery Stock Limited Replacement Guarantee

We guarantee that our product(s) will arrive in good, viable condition. If your dormant bare-root stock (including potted fig and pomegranate), kiwi, grape, artichoke, asparagus, horseradish, rhubarb, or (straw/rasp/black/blue/boysen)berry does not leaf out, contact our Customer Service Department *on or before June 1st* and return the plant for inspection. We will issue you a credit for the price you paid for that plant (excluding freight) provided it does not show damage (rodent, mechanical, etc.) or root rot. This credit is redeemable toward the purchase of any other bare-root item of your choice the following year (Note: we reserve the right to not issue credit for replacement of already replaced items.) **This limited replacement guarantee does not apply to flower bulbs, citrus trees, potato seeds, olive trees, garlic, native plants, or conifer seedlings.**

### Limitation of Remedy

We warrant to the extent of the purchase price only that the seeds or plants sold hereunder are as described on the label within recognized tolerances. No other warranty is given, expressed or implied, of (1) the merchantability or fitness of the seeds or plants for any particular purpose, or (2) against loss due to any cause. We cannot accept any responsibility for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions (soil preparation, fertilization, weed and pest control, temperature control, irrigation...etc.) that must be met to insure the success of your crop(s) or plants.