

Quick Guide Brambles & Blueberry

Brambles (Raspberry, Blackberry)

Where to plant:

- Plant in full sun; plants will grow in part shade, but will not produce as much fruit
- Prefer rich, well-drained soil (brambles will not tolerate wet soil), mix plenty of garden compost or well-rotted manure into the soil prior to planting
- Do not plant where potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, strawberries or eggplant have recently been grown, because these crops carry Verticillium, a root rot fungus which can infect brambles
- Raspberry plants have shallow roots - keep the planting area weed free (weeds are high competitors for nutrients and water)
- Before planting a large variety, put a support system of horizontal wires in place.
- Birds will happily eat the berries, so protect your crop by covering with netting

Watering:

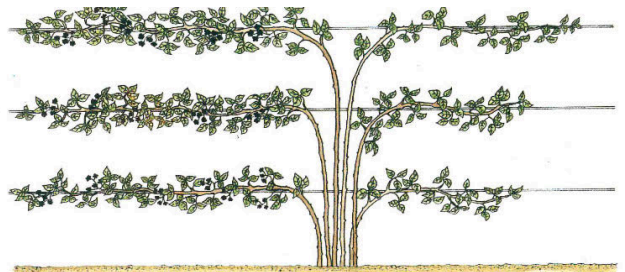
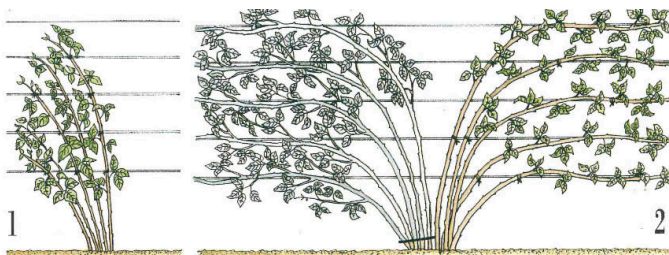
- Water new plants regularly for their first growing season – in dry hot summers water more often
- It is important not to let them dry out during the summer to increase the fruit size.
- Plants in containers need regular watering throughout the growing season and even daily in hot weather. (we carry small varieties of Raspberry and Blackberry that are thornless and suitable for containers. Any plant in a container is not covered by our 6 month warranty)

Fertilizing:

- Before fertilizing a soil test should be done to determine what sort of fertilizer to use, in respect to what the plant needs. The soil test will also determine if the pH is correct for that tree and whether or not it will be able to take up fertilizer.
- Bio-Tone can be applied at the time of planting. It is organic and helps the plant grow strong roots and help new plants get maximum water and nutrients from the soil.
- Please see our Garden Shop Info Desk for more information and the best recommendations.

Pruning:

- There are two types of raspberries. **Summer-fruiting** raspberries develop their fruit on last year's growth, while **fall-bearing** types produce berries on new canes (for example the variety 'Anne'). They will need support for their stems.
- There are also compact varieties that can be grown with no support.
- Blackberries: Fruit is produced on two-year-old canes (i.e. the previous season's growth) so, to make things easy, keep this year's fruiting canes separate from young new canes as the season progresses - for example like this:



Blueberry:

Where to plant:

- Plant in full sun
- High soil acidity and relatively high organic matter are essential for optimum production
- Very specific soil requirements due to the unique root structure:
 - Root system composed primarily of fine, fibrous roots near the soil surface
 - Roots are unable to penetrate compacted soils; and have limited tolerance to very wet or very dry soil
 - Shallow root system is sensitive to temperature extremes (mulch in winter and summer)
- Ideal soil: well-drained, sandy loam with pH of 4.5 to 5.5
- Improve your soil before planting by digging in lots of bulky, acidic organic matter, such as pine needles, leafmould or composted conifer bark. Avoid well-rotted farmyard manure or mushroom compost, which are too alkaline for blueberries.

ALL Blueberries are self pollinating. Plant more than one variety to yield a bigger harvest. For fresh berries all summer, consider planting early, mid & late season bearers. For fresh eating, baking, jams, preserves. Cover early with bird netting! Birds will eat unripe berries.

Watering:

- Must be kept moist (but not soaking wet) throughout the growing season
- Harvest your rain water and use this to water your blueberries (or any other acid loving plants)
- Tap water is usually too alkaline, especially in hard water areas

Fertilizing:

- Check the soil pH every spring – it should be pH5.5 or lower
- If the pH is too high add fertilizer for ericaceous/ acid loving plants
- Take care not to overfeed, as blueberries dislike excess fertilizer
- Poor growth could also be due to unsuitably alkaline conditions, excess nutrients and fluctuations in soil moisture

Pruning:

- Proper pruning maintains the productivity
- Young bushes do not need pruning during the first 2-3 years
- After that bushes should be pruned annually when dormant, prior to bud break in the spring
- Damaged and old canes that are no longer producing strong new wood should be cut to ground level
- Aim for good airflow

Berries start to ripen from mid-summer onwards, changing from green to dusky blue when ready to pick. They won't all ripen at the same time, so check plants repeatedly over several weeks.

