



CANE BERRY GROWING GUIDE

Congratulations on becoming an owner of a new cane berry vine!

Below is a quick start guide to getting your vine established as well as some tips for how to avoid common problems. More information is available at fourwindsgrowers.com. Now that you have unpacked your tree, be sure to remove the plastic bag that keeps the soil in place during shipping.

Location:

All the Cane Berries are shallow-rooted and will fill a space 3 to 4 feet wide. Beds should be at least that wide and 1 to 2 feet deep. If soil does not drain well, use raised beds. Note that some varieties will grow erect canes while others grow trailing canes that should be trained on a trellis of some sort to keep them in check.

Planting:

Plant raspberries in the ground in rows or containers, space plants 3' apart. For best results, plant berries in full sun (or afternoon shade in hot climates) in rich, well-drained soil using a trellis or fence for support. Most are everbearing, producing 2 crops per year: the heaviest crop in the fall and a lighter crop in June. Prune out and remove older canes during the dormant season (after the second crop) or to control size.

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Watering:

How often to water will vary on the environment and depends on soil porosity, tree size, and temperature. Cane Berries like moist but not overly wet soil. Soil type will dictate water use. Irrigate with soaker hoses or drip lines rather than overhead watering because it can cause fruit rot and other fungal issues. Be sure to adjust based on weather conditions.

Fertilizing:

If the leaf color is good and the plants are growing and fruiting well, it is not necessary to fertilize. If fertilizer is needed, rake back mulch, spread fertilizer on top of the soil, and recover with mulch. In early spring or at first bloom, apply a 20-20-20 formula at a rate of 4 lbs per 100 ft of row. Organic fertilizers such as blood meal, cottonseed meal, fish meal, or alfalfa meal are alternative applications.

Amend soil with well-composted organic matter. If under composted material is used such as leaves or manure, do not plant for 2 months to allow it to break down. Buried pockets of organic matter may become toxic to roots. Mulching with organic matter is a good option.

Trellising:

Cane Berries are manageable in a garden if they are trellised and pruned correctly. End posts should be strong (4 to 6 inches in diameter) with intermediate posts at least 2x2 inches, spaced no more than 20 ft apart. Strong galvanized wire (No. 10-12) should be used for durability.

Blackberries and boysenberries are commonly grown on 3 wire trellis or double 3 wire trellis. A good technique for raspberries is to have a permanent wire at 4 ft and a detachable wire at 2 1/2 ft. The detachable wires are used to bring the newly grown canes into the rows. Double wires can also be used and provide more air circulation.

Pruning:

Blackberries: After the summer harvest, the old canes that fruited are cut back to the ground. Leave 5 to 8 new canes per plant and all the other new canes are cut back to the ground. In the winter, cut the new canes back to 5 to 6 ft long and spread them across the trellis. Side branches can be cut back to 12 inches. In spring and summer, watch for thorny "suckers" and cut them off at the ground level.

Raspberries: Hoe-out canes that extend into pathways. After the late spring harvest, remove the old fruiting canes, select, and tie the strongest well-spaced new canes (8-12 per plant) to the trellis wire, and cut off the remaining canes at the ground level.

Everbearing varieties bear mostly on the current season's growth in the fall (from September through November), so they are usually completely cut back to the ground each winter. If a small June crop is desired, the canes are instead cut below the autumn fruiting region rather than cutting the entire cane back to the ground.

Summer bearing varieties bear fruit in June on over-wintered canes while new vegetative shoots grow from the ground to become the next year's fruiting canes. No canes are removed in winter (except for weak, damaged, or broken canes) Instead the canes are shortened to 6 ft. All fruiting canes are cut back to the ground after harvest allowing new canes to grow.

Mulch:

The use of mulches will conserve precious water and help inhibit weed growth. A 2"-3" layer of wood chips, fir bark, compost, or other organic matter can be very helpful for water retention. To reflect heat and hasten fruit ripening, "Living mulches" such as nitrogen-fixing clovers can also be planted between trees & shrubs. To avoid root diseases, always keep grasses and other vegetation away from the root collar area. Keep all mulches at least six inches away from the base of the trunk or shrub. For growers in cold climates, an extra thick 8"-10" layer of mulch around the base of the tree just before winter acts as a layer of insulation that will help keep your roots alive over winter.