

Primocane raspberries will bear a crop in the year they are planted. You cut down the entire hedgerow in the dormant season, leaving only about an inch of old wood at the base. This helps lessen disease buildup and pruning labor.

Of course, you could manage fall or primocane bearing raspberries to produce both the fall and the spring crop, but you generally do not gain much of an advantage. Due to the fluctuating winter temperatures in most of Missouri, red raspberries do not overwinter well in our area. The advantage of growing primocane bearing raspberries is that the canes don't have to go through the winter to have a crop. Here we discuss only management of the late summer/fall crop.

**Recommended Cultivars:** *Red* – Heritage, Caroline, Josephine, Joan J. and Himbo Top;  
*Yellow* – Anne, Kiwigold.

**Spacing and Planting:** Space plants 1 to 2 feet apart in-row with rows at least 8 feet apart. Use the closer in-row spacing if you want to harvest more berries the first year. New canes arise from buds near the crown or from roots and the hedgerow should fill out by the second year. Afterwards the hedgerow should be maintained from 12 to 24 inches wide.

**Planting:** Plant in spring as soon as the ground can be worked. Keep roots moist during planting and cut the cane down to ground level after the plant is set. Remove the cane from the planting. Water after planting. Primocane bearing raspberries benefit from a light, fluffy straw mulch about 3 inches deep. If the soil is heavy or not perfectly drained, plant on a berm or raised ridge. Compost or composted manures worked into the soil before planting is beneficial to raspberries since they thrive in a well-drained soil.

**Pruning and Training:** Primocane bearing raspberries will produce a crop both in the summer and the fall if managed like summerbearing red raspberries, but we recommend managing for the late summer to fall crop only. To do this, cut all the canes down with a mower or with pruning shears or loppers in January, February or March. Remove old canes from the planting to control diseases.

Install wooden or steel posts (at least) every 25 feet down the row in the first year. During blossom in midsummer, tie heavy gauge baling twine between the posts about 1 1/2 to 2 feet high on either side of the hedgerow to support the canes as the fruit ripens. You may construct a "T" trellis on a post instead. The "T" should be about 18 to 24 inches wide. If you do not use the "T", you should maintain a narrower row width for your hedgerow. Tuck the canes up between the "T" or the twine when the raspberries begin to blossom.

When new shoots begin to grow, thin them to the 5 strongest per square foot. To maintain the hedgerow at the 12 to 24 inch width, mow the edges regularly or pull out the suckers that grow out of bounds in the spring. Steel posts are set down the row at 25 foot intervals to accommodate a temporary twine trellis to hold the berries up for harvest.

**Fertilizer Application:** The best way to determine fertilizer needs of the plants is by following recommendations based on soil sample results. The recommendations given here are general and should be fine-tuned to the fertility, nutrient holding ability of your particular soil, and the observations of the growth of your plants.

**Planting year:**

**One month after planting:** Apply 1 cup 13-13-13 or equivalent per 10 feet of hedgerow.

**When blossoms appear in midsummer:** Apply 2 tablespoons ammonium nitrate (33-0-0) or equivalent per 10 feet of row.

**Subsequent years:**

**Fertilize in spring:** Apply 2 cups 13-13-13 or equivalent per 10 feet of hedgerow.

**When blossoms appear in early to mid summer:** Apply 4 tablespoons ammonium nitrate (33-0-0) or equivalent per 10 feet of hedgerow.

Primocane bearing raspberries blossom in midsummer and should be side-dressed with fertilizer at this time (Apply 2 tablespoons (in the planting year) or 4 tablespoons (subsequent years) ammonium nitrate (33-0-0) or equivalent per 10 feet of row).

**Blossoms and pollination:** You do not need 2 cultivars for cross pollination of raspberries. Even so, raspberries are insect pollinated and aided by wind pollination as well.

**Harvest:** Primocane bearing raspberries generally begin fruiting at the tip of the canes in August and may continue to bear fruit until frost. They fruit the same year they are planted. A temporary trellis support is constructed when the plants are blossoming in order to keep the plants up and off the ground during harvest. Berries are ripe when they can be easily removed from the plant and are palatable. Berries are perishable, so remove them from the field as soon as possible. Raspberries do not have a long "shelf-life" in the refrigerator which is why you do not often see them in good condition in the grocery store. Yield is 100 to 150 pints per 100 foot of row. Primocane bearing raspberries thrive in high tunnels (unheated greenhouses) and this may be a viable option for home growers on a small scale. You can even grow the raspberries in containers or grow bags in the tunnel.

**Pests and Problems:** Spotted wing drosophila (SWD) is a pest in our area. It is extremely important to eradicate perennial weeds before you plant. A light, straw mulch is recommended to suppress weeds, but be sure the emerging primocanes can easily grow through it. Keep the beds weeded throughout the growing season. The practice of mowing canes that bore the fall crop down in winter and removing them from the planting will help decrease the number of disease organisms.

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