



EASY TO GROW, GOOD FOR YOU, TASTE GREAT —

but a little raspberry research
will sweeten the success

Jeff Edwards

We know raspberries are good for us and – believe it or not – are relatively easy to grow in Wyoming.

Once blooming, they provide a habitat for a variety of pollinators. Here are some things to consider before starting a raspberry adventure.

Site selection – Raspberries prefer well-drained, sandy loam soil with a pH 6.0 to 6.5. Soil pH can be managed on Wyoming's less-than-ideal soils by completing a soil analysis and following fertility recommendations. The correct fertilizer plan will include the addition of iron or sulfur or both (annually) to compensate for the high pH of Wyoming soils. Micronutrients like boron (which assists with flowering and fruit development) are required. Planting a raspberry patch in an old corral might seem like a good idea – and you will grow really healthy canes – but the plants will be weak fruit producers because of too much nitrogen. In addition to traditional field production, raspberries produce well in high tunnel or hoop house environments.

Irrigation – Irrigation should be in place at planting time. Transplanted rootstock needs irrigated immediately. Raspberry canes grow rapidly and can use up to 2 inches of water per week.

Plant selection – Raspberries are available in red, purple, black, and yellow fruiting varieties. They are also available in floricanes (summer fruiting) or primocanes (fall fruiting varieties). Each type has a different management strategy, so understanding what variety you are growing is important (The publication noted at the end of this article contains variety information). Purchase root stock from a commercial supplier. Just because a neighbor wants to get rid of a raspberry plant of questionable origin does not mean it will produce well for you.

Fighting the spread – There are several varieties that will spread quickly and create a non-negotiable patch (Floricanes varieties seem to

GOOD FOR YOU!

These delectable berries are low calorie, nutrient-packed, and high in fiber. According to the USDA National Nutrient Database, one cup of raspberries (about 123 grams) contains only 64 calories, 1.5 grams of protein, 0.8 grams of fat, and 15 grams of carbohydrate (including 8 grams of fiber and 5 grams of sugar).

Raspberries provide many nutrients. They are high in vitamin C and manganese, and contain vitamins E and K, folate, iron and potassium. They are rich in soluble fiber (e.g., pectins), which may help prevent heart disease by lowering abnormally high levels of

blood cholesterol.

Foods high in soluble fibers may be beneficial to people who have diabetes by slowing the digestion and therefore release carbohydrates into the bloodstream and maintaining a more even blood glucose level.

In addition, berries are high in natural antioxidants, including anthocyanins and phytochemicals such as beta-carotene, and ellagic, coumaric, and ferulic acids. These compounds reduce the effects of damaging free radicals, thereby protecting heart health, and reducing the risk of certain types of cancer.



spread more than primocane varieties – I don't know why). Mowing along the edges of the berry patch helps define the area and keep plants from invading.

Tips for picking and not getting poked – The number-one tip is to prevent pokes by growing a thornless variety – like “Joan J.” Wear long sleeves and long pants. Some people have used 4-8 ml nitrile gloves. Poking is usually inevitable, so have something available to pick out the thorns.

Best technique for picking:

1. loop picking container through belt loop on pants
2. grab plant terminal (or non-ripe berry) with one hand
3. pick ripe berries with the other hand
4. repeat

Bees – Healthy plants attract bees. Don't be(e) afraid (unless you are allergic to bee stings!). They are busy doing their jobs. Ignore them and they'll ignore you. If you happen to grab a bee, let go and move on. If the buzz changes in pitch to a faster pulse and higher frequency, walk away quickly – this is an angry bee that will sting.

Pests – Cane borers, crown borers, and leaf rollers are the most common pests right now. The spotted winged drosophila is a new threat in Wyoming – but that is a whole other article (see article in fall 2013 *Barnyards & Backyards* issue for a brief introduction).

FLORICANE V. PRIMOCANE VARIETIES

Floricanes (summer producing)

- produce fruit on second-year wood
- require selective pruning of canes that are no longer productive
- plants are generally shorter than primocanes (up to 3 feet)
- usually do not need trellised
- produce well mid-summer
- do well in areas with shortened growing seasons (Laramie, Lander, Pinedale)

Primocanes (fall fruiting)

- produce fruit on first-year canes
- produce best if mowed completely to the ground each year
- taller than floricanes (5 to 8 feet)
- usually require trellising
- usually do not produce well until September
- produce into the fall until a hard freeze
- require the full season (Torrington, Riverton, Powell, Sheridan)



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An excellent publication (for purchase or download) about raspberry production is available from Cornell University at this website (note, we use Bitly to shorten long URLs): <http://bit.ly/knowaboutraspberries>

Wyoming conditions are different than described in the production guide but nothing that cannot be modified to have very productive plants in Wyoming.

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I am often asked – I have blossoms on my canes, when will I have berries? It depends on the variety ... I tested this in 2014. Here are my results:

1. July 22-28 – This cane is producing like a florican. It branched low (at the point it was pruned), and fruit is early (typical of summer producing varieties) on second-year wood. Not typical production for primocane varieties.

These are pictures of the same cane for the season.

2. Day Zero – This variety is called Anne – it is a yellow primocane variety that can produce 4- to 5-foot canes in one season. Flowers are just forming at the plant apex August 2.
3. Day 15 – August 17. Cane terminal has continued to grow. More blossoms have developed – no berries.
4. Day 45 – September 16. Cane terminal full of green and maturing berries; some have been harvested, others will be ready the following day.

Bottom line: development is variety dependent. Blossom to harvest takes a minimum of 40 days to produce berries. If growing primocane varieties, hope for a very long fall as they will continue production until a hard freeze.