

Growing your own cane berries

Cane berries are delicious bundles of juice held together by the thinnest of skins. They can only be appreciated when they are picked at peak ripeness. Most of the berries offered by supermarkets are shipped thousands of miles and are picked unripe with low sugar levels to extend shelf-life. All the berry fruits are rich in anti-oxidants which help to fight cancer and offset the effects of ageing. Most of the anti-oxidants are concentrated in the colour of the fruit – the darker the colour, the higher the level of cancer-fighting chemicals. Blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries have three times the health benefits of those foods most people believe are our healthiest foods: broccoli, citrus and apples. Just 100 grams of these berries provide all our daily recommended levels.

When you buy unripe blueberries, even though they have turned blue, their anti-oxidants are only one third of that contained in ripe berries picked a week later. Growing your own really is the path to good health!



How to grow berries

Berries thrive in cool springs and summers that do not reach over 30 degrees C, which is when these plants stop flowering and fruiting. They are forest-edge plants that can tolerate some shade, preferably East or North-East facing, and avoiding Westerly sun in areas with very hot summers. Birds are the most prominent pests. Canes and strawberry beds will need to be netted. They need soils that are both well drained and have a good organic content to boost water holding capacity.

Anti-oxidant table

Oral units – oxygen radical absorbable capacity per 100gms

Recommended intake – 3,500 units per day

Blueberry	2,400
Blackberry	2,036
Strawberry	1,540
Raspberry	1,220
Asparagus	1,200
Broccoli	890
Orange	750
Potatoes	313
Apple	218
Tomato	186

Pruning and harvesting – see opposite

Berry Harvest Calender

Crop/variety	Taste ranking	November	December	January	February	March	April
Raspberry "Tullameen"							
Raspberry "Chilliwack"							
Raspberry "Heritage"							
Raspberry "Willamette"							
Blackberry "Chester"							
Strawberry "Cambridge Rival"	95%						
Strawberry "Chandler"	82%						
Strawberry "Toyonoka"	85%						
Strawberry "Kunawase / Hokowase"	70/80%						
Strawberry "Alinta"	75%						

Mail order cane berries

Raspberries

Plant the bare-rooted crowns 35cm apart and train them to a trellis, to enjoy raspberries from December to April. Summer-fruiting raspberries and the thornless blackberry, fruit on canes produced the previous season. After harvest, simply cut down the canes that have fruited, and start to train the new growth up onto the trellis.

See diagrams - bottom right

All raspberries - five bare-rooted plants.

Harvest times for Gippsland VIC

Retail \$14.95, Club \$12.95

Despatched from June

Chilliwack

Summer fruiting. Sturdy, almost thornless, canes carry sweet, fat fruit in mid-Summer.

●Nov-Jan WRACH

Tullameen

Summer fruiting. With the longest harvest of any raspberry, Tullameen's vigorous canes carry large, firm berries of great flavour.

●Dec-Feb WRATU

Heritage

Autumn fruiting raspberries are the easiest to prune. This variety produces a light Summer crop, followed by huge yields from February, until the frosts start. ●Mar-Apr WRAHE

Chester blackberry

thornless blackberry

Summer fruiting. Bring back those childhood memories of 'blackberrying', without the vicious thorns. This thornless plant is easily trained to a trellis, just like Summer raspberries, and provides masses of sweet, glossy fruit.

Two bare-rooted plants. ●Jan-Feb Not WA

Retail \$9.95, Club \$7.50

Cane berry collection

In just 10 square metres (10m long by 1m wide) you can have soft, sweet fruit from November to April from your own backyard. Collection includes 5 Chilliwack, 5 Tullameen, and 2 Willamette raspberries, along with 2 Thornless blackberry crowns, that all fruit in Summer or Autumn.

19 bare-rooted plants. Not WA

Retail \$64.40, Club \$54.95 WCOF

Raspberry Collection

Includes 5 Chiliwack, 5 Tullameen, 5 Heritage and 2 Willamette raspberries. 17 BR plants Retail \$57.40, Club \$47.95 WCORS



Photo courtesy Sunny Creek Berry Farm sunnycrk@dcsi.net.au

Figure 1. Summer fruiting & pruning cycle e.g. Chilliwack

Year 1



Winter
Crown dormant



Spring
New canes grow



Autumn
Harvest tip crop

Year 2



Winter
Primocanes are tip pruned. They are now called floricanes.



Spring
Floricanes branch, new primocanes grow



Summer
Harvest main crop



Late Summer -Autumn
Prune out floricanes, let primocanes develop.

Figure 2. Autumn fruiting & pruning cycle e.g. Heritage



Winter
Crown dormant



Spring
New canes grow



Summer -Autumn
Harvest fruit



Autumn -Winter
Cut canes to base after harvest