

# Cane Soft Fruit



**RASPBERRIES:** raspberry canes are often sold in bundles of 5 or 10, bare-rooted, between autumn and early spring, from certified pest and disease-free stock. Container-grown plants can be bought, but care must be taken not to plant out too late in spring if a good root system is to be established before the cane naturally dies.

● **Staking:** raspberries prefer to be tied to a form of framework and this is best provided with posts and wires up to 2m high. They should be planted 50cm apart in rows with up to 2m between them

in an open sunny position.

● **Pruning:** For summer-fruiting varieties, reduce canes back to 25cm high in the first spring after planting. In following years, cut fruited canes to ground level after harvesting the crop.

Cut autumn-fruiting varieties to ground level after fruiting or in early spring and the resulting canes will fruit the following autumn - usually without support.

● **Blackberries, loganberries, boysenberries, tayberries and wineberries:** produce fruit on two-year-old shoots on long canes; stake as for raspberries or tie shoots to a form of support to avoid fruit trailing on the ground.

● **Pruning:** In spring of year one, cut all canes to 5cm above ground level. Tie the resulting new canes in to the supports to flower and fruit in summer of year two. After harvest, cut all fruiting canes to ground level. Tie in all new shoots to the support at 50cm intervals, removing surplus or weak canes.

# Strawberries

Strawberries take up little space, are easy to maintain and their delicious fruit can be eaten straight from the plant. Their trailing habit makes them ideal for growing in containers or hanging baskets and the plants are cheap and easy to propagate.

Plant outdoors from late June until September for a crop the following summer. Use a well-drained soil with plenty of additional well-rotted compost or farmyard manure. Plant in full sun in a sheltered spot.



## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Fork & spade
  - Secateurs
  - Fertiliser
  - Organic planting material
  - Post & wire supports
- Top fruit:**
- Fruit trees
  - Stakes & ties
  - Hammer & nails
  - Sledgehammer for stakes
- Soft fruit:**
- Bushes or canes
- Garden string for tying
- For more information:  
[www.rhs.org.uk/advice](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice)  
[www.plantforlife.info](http://www.plantforlife.info)

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## THE EASY GUIDE TO

# GROWING FRUIT



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## GROWING FRUIT

A succulent harvest of ripe berries in summer and orchard fruits in autumn is a wonderful bonus for gardeners, with very little effort required. Fruit trees have the added bonus of beautiful spring blossom and ballerina style trees can be grown in the smallest space, while berry fruits can be grown against a sunny wall or fence and strawberries are suitable for containers or hanging baskets.

## TOP FRUIT

Fruit trees, often referred to as top fruit, can be further divided into:

**PIP FRUIT:** apples, pears

**STONE FRUIT:** plums, apricots, peaches, greengages, nectarines, cherries, damsons.

Each type has a wide range of varieties and, by careful selection, fruit can be produced over a long period in summer for storage into autumn.

Pay attention to your choice of plant, as it is often best to grow different varieties of the same type of fruit near to one another to improve pollination and produce the best crop.

**SIZES:** Top fruit are offered as:

- Maidens (trees for further training)
- Bush (short stem) (use stake and tie)
- Half standard (stem of up to 1.2m) (use stake and tie)
- Standard (stem of up to 2m) (use stake and tie)
- Horizontal trained or espalier (need training on wires)
- Fan (usually grown on wires against a wall)
- Cordon (single stem - pip fruit only) (support on wires, very compact)



FAN-TRAINED APPLE



ESPALIER-TRAINED PEAR



APRICOT BUSH



APPLE CORDON

## PLANTING TOP FRUIT

**PREPARATION:** Good preparation is important. Dig a good-sized planting hole at least 1m across and 25cm deep **1**. Add organic material such as well-rotted farmyard manure, garden compost, spent mushroom compost or other proprietary planting material.

**SUPPORT:** Half-standard and standard trees and any bushes in wind-exposed gardens need staking and tying **2**. Horizontal-trained, fan and cordon trees need wire supports, whether free-standing or planted against a wall or fence **3**.

**WATERING:** If growing trees in grass, keep a clear area of at least 1m in diameter around the base of the tree to prevent competition and promote growth.

Water trees well after planting and also in dry weather. All will benefit from an application of a general fertiliser each spring.

**PRUNING:** Pruning is important and with most top fruit the aim is to keep an open centre to the tree which allows light to enter and aids ripening of the fruit **4**. Fan, horizontal-trained and cordons need special pruning, so seek advice from reference books or visit [www.rhs.org.uk/advice](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice).

Prune pip fruit in winter. Any plants grown on a wall or a wire should also be pruned in summer to encourage fruiting spurs. Prune stone fruit in summer to avoid attacks of fungal disease.



1



2



3



4



## SOFT FRUIT

All soft fruit must be planted in well-prepared soil with added organic material such as well-rotted farmyard manure, garden or proprietary planting composts. They also benefit from a mulch of the same organic composts ideally during late winter before any new growth starts.

**BUSH SOFT FRUIT:** Black, red and whitecurrants and gooseberries come in a range of varieties and are normally sold as bush-shaped plants of one or two years old. Standards and pre-trained cordon trees are also available. Grow them as individual plants or in rows at 1.2m apart with 2m minimum between rows. You do not need different varieties for pollination as all are self-fertile. Attention to pruning will increase not only the size of the crop but the long-term wellbeing of the bush. Try to maintain an open habit that will allow sunlight to reach all the fruit and ripen it quickly. All bush and cane soft fruit benefit from an annual application of a general fertiliser in early to mid spring.

**CURRANTS:** Prune blackcurrants after fruiting by removing all fruited shoots in the second and subsequent years after planting once the crop has been harvested. Cut these off at ground level to make way for the newly developing shoots which will take their place. Red and whitecurrants should be pruned in late winter and early spring, by reducing all the new side shoots produced in the previous year to 4cm in length. Reduce any leading shoots to about 15cm from the point at which they grew in the previous year. During early summer, shorten any shoots arising from these cuts back to within 15cm from their origins, to produce fruiting shoots or spurs. In addition, throughout their lives, keep a short basal stem up to 30cm long, removing any growth from it.

**GOOSEBERRIES:** Reduce all the previous years' shoots back to within 20-25cm from their origin in late winter and spring, and remove any strong crossing shoots. Encourage a short basal stem, as with red and whitecurrants. Because many gooseberry varieties have a weeping habit, where possible make any cuts to an upward and outward-facing bud.

