

Fruit Bushes

April 2023

BERRIES

Raspberries

'Polka' – bare root canes to plant now

- Best in a sheltered, sunny position but will tolerate part shade
- Apply a layer of well-rotted compost or bonemeal to the soil. Repeat every year in February around the canes making sure not to damage the shallow roots
- Separate canes and plant 30 – 45cm apart
- Harvest: July – October
- Cut back all the canes to ground level in February. For an earlier crop in early summer, prune only the top 10 cm from some of the canes. These canes will give a much earlier crop and at the same time allow the traditionally pruned canes to push through and crop in autumn
- These canes will mostly support themselves with only the odd bit of help from some sticks in strategic positions
- Container growing - Single raspberry plants can be grown in 38cm (15in) diameter containers, training the canes up bamboo poles. Keep the compost moist and feed with a liquid general-purpose fertiliser on a monthly basis during the growing season

Strawberries

- **'Elsanta'**
- Orange-red fruit with delicious taste
- Height and Spread: 10 – 50cm
- Grow 30 – 45cm apart
- Can be grown in containers
- Harvest: June to July
- Best in a sunny site and well-drained soil
- Spread straw around the plants to protect the fruit

Gooseberries

- **'Invicta'**

- Tasty pale-green berries

- Vigorous, spreading and thorny

- Resistant to mildew

- Dual-purpose

- Best in a sunny, sheltered location but will tolerate shady site in moist, fertile soil

- Harvest: July

- Height & Spread: 1.6m (5ft)

- Prune back side shoots to five leaves in the summer to encourage fruiting spurs to develop and cut back leading shoots by a third in winter

- Can be trained as a fan shape - Train single-stemmed cordons against walls or onto canes by tying the leading shoot tip onto the support. Prune side shoots back to five leaves in summer and shorten the main tip by a quarter and shorten side shoots to three buds in winter to encourage new fruit spurs next year

Blueberries

- **'Blue Crop' 'Brigitta' 'Duke'**

- Blueberries require light, free-draining acidic soils, with plenty of rich, organic matter if they're to thrive

- If you don't have suitable soil, simply grow blueberries in a pot containing ericaceous compost, giving the plants a high potash feed (such as tomato feed) occasionally during the growing season

- Plant two different varieties of blueberries to ensure cross-pollination. A single blueberry plant will produce fruit, but the yields will be higher and the fruits bigger if more than one plant is grown. They require a position in full sun or light shade

- Water in well and keep moist using rainwater rather than tap water if possible. Tap water contains lime which renders the soil less acidic over time

- Blueberries produce fruit on branches that were produced the previous year. Grows to about 1.5m high

- Fruits are ready to pick when they have turned a deep blue. The fruit should easily pull away from the cluster when ripe

- Mulch each spring. Chipped up pine tree or pine needles are ideal mulches to place around plants because they're fairly acidic

CURRENTS

Redcurrants

- **'Rovada'**
- Large, luscious fruit produced in profusion on huge 'strings'
- Height & Spread: 1 – 1.5m
- Approx. 2.7kg of fruit per plant
- Harvest: July – August
- Excellent eaten fresh or from the freezer
- Full sun or partial shade and well-drained soil

Blackcurrants

- **'Ben Sarek'**
- Ideal for small gardens or patios, with a maximum height of 90cm
- Heavy crop of large berries
- Good resistance to mildew
- Tolerant of frost at planting time
- Harvest: Mid July to August
- Stems grow from soil level
- Full sun or partial shade and well-drained soil

RHUBARB

- **'Victoria' 'Timperley Early'**
- Plant so the tip of the crown is just visible above the soil
- Spread: 75 – 90cm
- Green stalks that are reddish towards the base
- A cool season, hardy perennial plant
- Harvest: April – May
- Will grow in any soil except poorly drained clay
- Prefers sun but will tolerate partial shade
- Cut out any flower stems
- Rhubarb can also be planted in very large pots at least 50cm deep and wide
- **Do not harvest in first year!**

GRAPE VINES

- **'Boskoop Glory' 'Vroege van der Laan' /Early from the Lane**

- Hardy and easy to grow both outdoors or in greenhouse.

- Height: 8m.

- Spread: 1.2m.

- Sunny, sheltered position.

FIGS

- **'Brown Turkey'**

- Large deciduous shrub with bold, deeply lobed leaves

- Insignificant flowers followed by edible fruit to 10cm in length in the spring, at first green, but purplish when ripe develop in spring and ripen to purple-brown throughout the summer for harvesting in late summer or autumn when soft

- Usually one crop of fruit per year, but sometimes two in a hot summer or under protection

- A second crop often develops in late summer and if protected, these fruits will ripen during the following summer

- Large crops of sweet, juicy figs with a deep red flesh under their brown skins

- Best grown fan-trained against a warm wall or fence, using a root restriction method such as a box of paving slabs with the bottom filled with a warm layer of rubble or broken corks

- Also suitable for cultivation in a container

- In March remove a proportion (1/4 to 1/3) of older branches

- Height: 3m

- Spread: 4m

- Harvest – August to September