

Rhubarb

Soil & Soil Preparation: Dig the soil to a good depth & introduce a high level of well rotted organic matter such as manure or compost into the soil to provide nutrients & a good soil structure.

Sowing: Rhubarb plants should be planted in early spring and requires temperatures around 40°F to break its winter dormancy and renew growth. Crowns should be planted about 8" below the soil surface with the crown bud about 2" below the soil surface. Any young shoots that exist should just break the soil surface. Spacing of the crowns will depend on the variety but around 24" - 30" is right for many varieties.

Position: Choose a location that is well drained and in part shade. If the soil is not well drained water logging can result in the crown rotting. Rhubarb grows best in slightly acidic soil-pH 6.0-6.8.

Tending: If flowering seed stalks develop, cut them as soon as possible; they will reduce the leaf stalk yields. Add manure/compost but do not cover the rhubarb crowns. Do not use fresh manure.

Harvest: Cut the stems at soil level or pull up by the stems. Do not harvest the plants in the 1st year as the nutrients produced by the leaves should be channeled back into the roots to ensure a strong root system. In the 2nd year harvest a couple of stalks per plant. Harvest as normal in remaining years.



Grapes

First Year Care: Prepare the soil (pH between 5.0 and 6.0) plant the grapes, fertilize, mulch and keep free of weeds, insects and diseases. Prune off broken or dead portions of branches & roots, & top growth to a single cane. The vines are normally tied to a stake during this year to prevent damage & make spraying more effective. If the season of planting is dry, supplemental watering is also necessary to keep the vines growing. It is important to get as much first-year growth as possible.

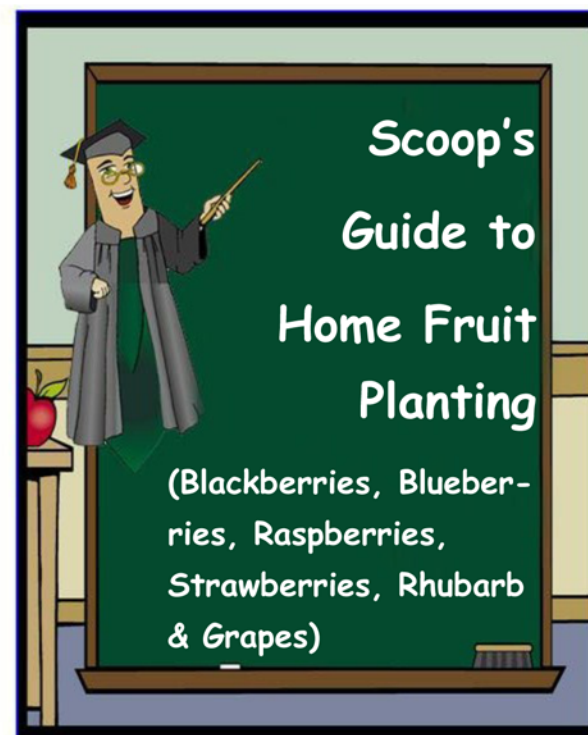
Planting: Vines planted for trellises are normally placed 8' apart, while those planted for training on an arbor can be placed 4' apart. The 2nd season is when a system for training the vines should be selected.

Pruning: Prune after the danger of severe cold weather has past. Make cuts on an angle to keep moisture from setting on the ends. Cut your vine back hard. Leave the main, two year old stem and wood as your basic framework. Then allow two or three of the longer 'lateral' branches of last year's growth to form the rest of the simple framework. The rest of the growth can be pruned right back to the knobby clusters or spurs where past shoots grew. Another way to prune easily is to simply leave one branch off the main stem for every 10" or so. Then shorten that branch of last year's growth to two buds per shoot. You will do this each year, leaving just the top shoot to be pruned back to two buds and cutting off all the others, leaving that knobby head

Harvest: Three years are normally needed to establish a grape planting. During the third season, some harvest may be expected but the first full crop will not be produced until about the fourth or fifth year.

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Raspberries & Blackberries

- Although raspberries are quite adaptable they will be the most productive on well drained, sandy loam soils with a pH between 5.8 & 6.5
- Select a location that receives 6-8 hours of sunlight 300' away from any wild berry plants.
- To prevent possible soil borne infections, do not plant raspberries where tomatoes, potatoes, or eggplants have been previously grown.
- It is most desirable to plant in the early spring when proper soil conditions permit.
- Depending on the variety of berries selected, plants may be planted in hedgerows or using a hill system. It has been recommended to separate Black and Red Raspberry plantings.
- Red & Yellow Raspberries are recommended to be planted in a hedgerow or low trellis technique spaced 2' apart down the row and the rows 8 - 10' apart.
- Black Raspberries are recommended to be planted in a hill or low trellis technique spaced 2½' apart down the row and the rows 8 - 10' apart.
- Blackberries are recommended to be planted individually spaced 3' apart down the row and the rows 8 - 10' apart.
- Plantings should be well maintained with proper weed control, fertilization, regular pruning, insect and disease control.
- Mulching works well to prevent weeds, but do not use excessive mulching techniques as it is likely to lead to favorable conditions for root rots and disease.
- Trellis raspberries and blackberries to keep the plants cleaner and easier to pick.
- Prune black and red raspberries twice a year—first in early spring remove weak canes and cut canes over 5' back to 4.5—5'. Then immediately after harvest, remove canes that produced fruits. Heritage raspberries can be pruned twice for a spring crop and fall crop, or they can be mowed to the ground in March or April for one harvest in August.
- Prune blackberries twice as well. In late June or early July tip back actively growing vegetative shoots (primocanes) to 4'. After harvest, remove spent fruit producing canes (floricanes).

Blueberries

- Select a site with 6—8 hours sunlight for optimal yields. Blueberries do not like wet feet so the site should be well-drained.
- Soil preparation is extremely important as blueberries require a low pH (between 4.5 and 5.2) Contact your local Extension office for a soil testing kit. If the pH is above 5.5 add ammonium sulfate to raise the acidity and thereby lower the pH. Follow package directions and wear gloves when handling sulfates. Ideally, this soil preparation should be done 9-12 months prior to planting.
- Highbush varieties are recommended for Ohio. When selecting plants remember to purchase at least two different cultivars for cross-pollinating which will result in the biggest berries and highest yields.
- Plant after frost free date of May 12. Dig a hole that is twice the width and depth of the container. Add organic matter.
- Remove the root ball from the container and carefully roughen the side of the root ball with a hand pruner. Backfill around the root ball and cover any exposed roots with peat-soil mix to avoid water loss. Water in thoroughly.
- Set the plants 3 to 4 feet apart with rows 10 feet apart. Mulch but not excessively.
- Fertilize about four weeks after planting with 1/2 to 2/3 pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 feet of row. Keep the fertilizer at least 6 inches away from the stems of the plants. In succeeding years, apply 0.5 pound ammonium sulfate at bloom and another 0.5 pound four to six weeks later.
- Water 1 to 2 inches per week in growing season and until after harvest into September (Flower buds for next year form Aug-Sept). Do not limit water anytime during fruit formation or the size and yield will suffer.
- To increase yields in future years remove blooms and do not allow to set fruit until the plant reaches 2.5 feet in height.
- Pruning is not necessary until after year three then remove dead or weak branches.
- Net the bushes to protect berries from birds.
- Harvest 1 to 2 days after fruit become uniform blue in color. Blueberries keep for two weeks at 32 degrees F.

Strawberries

- There are two major types of strawberry plants: June-bearing and ever-bearing.
 - June-bearing plants produce a full crop the season after planting. In Ohio, the ripening season ranges from late May—end of June. They are the most popular because of their flavor, quality and higher yield.
 - Ever-bearing plants produce a full crop the season they are planted. Consider planting both types to get benefits of both.
 - Strawberries require full sun to maximize yields and quality. They prefer loose, fertile soils containing large amounts of organic matter. Soil should have a pH of 5.8—6.5.
 - Strawberries do not like soggy soil. They should be planted in raised beds, containers, or ridges if drainage is a problem.
 - Strawberries have roots, crown and leaves. When planting, make a deep trench to set roots vertically. Roots should not be bent. Cover roots and only half the crown with soil.
 - Early spring is best time for planting.
 - June-bearing are spaced 12—24 inches apart within rows 3' apart. Remove unwanted runners during first season.
 - Ever-bearing plants are set 8—12 inches apart in rows 30—36 inches apart
 - Fertilize with a balanced formula 7—10 days after planting, in mid-June if excessive rain and in mid-August.
 - On June-bearing, remove flower stalks as they appear throughout first growing season. On ever-bearing, remove blossoms as they appear until mid-June in the first year only.
 - Strawberries require 1—1.5 inches of water per week mid-June to mid-August.
 - Renovate plants right after harvest. Remove old leaves with mower set as high as blade will go to avoid injuring crowns. Cultivate between rows with rotary tiller. Thin plants within rows leaving 4—6 inches between plants. Topdress beds with 1 inch of soil. Expect fruit for three harvest seasons.
 - Mulch with 2—3 inches of straw over plants between Nov. 15 and Dec. 15. Pull mulch to side in early spring but cover flower buds if spring frost is predicted.
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