

## RED RASPBERRIES IN THE HOME GARDEN

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Raspberries are very adaptable to home gardens in New York State. The flavor of these berries is treasured and the fruit has many culinary uses. By choosing a proper planting site, varieties, and following a couple of production hints, the plants are easy to grow.

**Planting sites** should be well-drained to avoid problems with soil-borne fungus. Also good air drainage prevents spring frost damage. Berries should have a source of water and be protected from deer. The pH of the soil should be neutral.



**Variety selection** is important for producing high quality fruit. Plants should be ordered from suppliers in late summer and fall to assure the best selection. Both summer and fall bearing varieties are available, but the fall bearing varieties will bear most consistently for home gardeners, and have no problems with winter cold or fluctuating spring temperature injury. A standard fall berry released by Cornell 35 years ago is >Heritage=, the world=s predominant primocane fruiting cultivar. It was awarded a 2004 outstanding fruit cultivar award by the American Society of Horticultural Sciences (ASHS) at its annual convention in Austin, Texas, July 18. The Outstanding Cultivar Award recognizes fruit introductions that have had a significant impact on the fruit industry within the past 35 years. The awards are determined by the ASHS Fruit Breeding Work Group.



“Heritage is one of the most widely grown raspberry cultivars in the world,” said Courtney Weber, assistant professor of Horticultural Sciences and director of the small fruits breeding program at Cornell. “Heritage is the first red raspberry bred to ripen in the fall with quality and firmness good enough for shipping and wholesale markets and sufficient yields to be commercially viable. Because of these characteristics, Heritage has extended the season for consumers and raspberry growers and paved the way for the year-round fresh raspberry market Heritage is resistant or tolerant to most, if not all, major raspberry diseases and has been used as a parent in the breeding of at least five other commercial cultivars. Heritage is the standard variety by which raspberry breeders judge all fall-bearing varieties,” noted Weber.

In addition to ‘Heritage’, gardeners may wish to try other fall varieties such as ‘Autumn Britten’, ‘Autumn Bliss’, and ‘Caroline’. They have larger-sized fruits and bear earlier than Heritage.

**Care of plants includes** fertilization, watering, control of pests, and pruning. Compost or chemical fertilizers can be used. Chemical fertilizers should be applied in split applications in May and June. Water will be applied as needed, but remember that raspberries are shallow-rooted, and if there is no rain, they may need about an inch and one half of water every week. Since canes grow in the same season they produce, there are less pest problems. Leafhoppers and Japanese beetles are the main insect pests, while *Botrytis* rot of the fruit could be the most problematic fungus pest. Pruning is easy with fall berries because they are cut to the ground with a mower in March.

**Harvest and storage** is not complicated. The key point is that the berries must be placed in cold storage immediately after harvest, preferably at 32 or 33 F. They can be stored at these temperatures without freezing, and are good for three days to one week.

*For more information about growing red raspberries in the home garden, contact local your Master Gardener or county Cooperative Extension office.*