

GRAPES

Grapes are a welcome addition to any garden, allotment or for some varieties, greenhouse. They are climbing vines so will need support of a trellis.

PLANTING- There are two types of grapes - dessert and wine. Grapes will need support of a trellis, post and wires, or against a sunny wall.

GROWING- There are varieties of grapes better for outdoor growing and also types for indoor greenhouse growing. They need plenty of sun to ripen the fruits. Indoor grapes will need careful watering, but outdoor-grown grapes will only need watering in prolonged dry spells.

PRUNING- The main pruning time is early Winter (late November - December). Training and pinching out of new shoots, as well as fruit thinning, takes place in Spring and Summer.

HARVESTING- The best way to test if grapes are ready is by tasting them once they have coloured up. If they are juicy and taste sugary, then they are probably ready to pick. Wine grapes won't have the sugary taste, however they should still be tender and juicy.



STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries are incredibly easy to grow. They can be grown almost anywhere - in borders, containers or hanging baskets.

PLANTING- Strawberries are very versatile - they just need sun, shelter, and fertile, well-drained soil. Avoid windy sites which will prevent pollinating insects from reaching the flowers.

GROWING- Water frequently while new plants are establishing. Also water during dry periods in the growing season. Try to avoid wetting crowns and fruit as this can promote disease. In early Spring, apply general fertiliser such as Growmore. Netting may be required to protect fruit from birds.

PRUNING- In late Summer or Autumn, when the plants have finished fruiting it is a good idea to trim away all of the old foliage. Treat each plant individually and give it a good haircut with shears or a large pair of scissors.

HARVESTING- Pick strawberries when they are bright red all over, ideally during the warmest part of the day because

this is when they are at their most tasty.



RASPBERRIES

Raspberries are popular garden fruits that are easy to grow. Try growing both Summer and Autumn-fruiting varieties: just a few plants will reward you with plenty of fruit from mid-Summer until mid-Autumn.

PLANTING- Providing the soil is not frozen or waterlogged, Raspberry canes can be planted any time during the dormant season (between November and March). Raspberries like fertile, well drained soil, and though they will tolerate shade, you'll get a much better harvest by planting them in a sunny spot in the garden. Summer-fruiting raspberries need a frame, fence, or wall to support growth to around 1.5m. Autumn-fruiting raspberries are normally fine without support.

GROWING- It's very important to water raspberry canes during dry weather or your harvest will suffer. Feed your raspberries during Spring. Mulch around the canes with well-rotted manure (take care not to bury the canes), or apply a balanced fertiliser and then mulch with compost to help keep the roots moist in dry weather. Cover them with netting to prevent the birds eating your delicious crop when they start to fruit.

PRUNING- Prune Autumn-fruiting raspberries in late Winter, and Summer-fruiting raspberries during the Autumn. Cut back all the canes to ground level before new growth commences.

HARVESTING- Summer-fruiting raspberries fruit between June and early August depending on the specific variety, and Autumn-fruiting raspberries fruit between August and October. Your raspberries are ready to harvest when they come off the plant with a gentle tug.



Bow Garden & Aquatic Centre

Growing Your Own Fruit

A helpful guide...



You don't need an orchard, a dedicated allotment or greenhouse - fruit trees can fit in your borders and thrive in containers too.

Soft fruit will grow in most soil types, but ideally it should be rich and well-drained. Also they don't like heavy soils that get waterlogged, so dig in lots of organic matter if you have clay soil.

We hope you find this guide on growing fruit helpful, and enjoy the fruits of your labour!

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APPLES & PEARS

If you're not lucky enough to have an apple or pear tree in your garden already then don't worry... They are easy to establish. Apple and Pear trees are probably the easiest to grow and the most popular amongst gardeners. Apples and pears broadly fall under 2 main categories - Dessert (for eating) and Cookers (for cooking).

PLANTING- Containerised plants can be planted at any time of year. Ideally, position in a sunny, sheltered spot away from any frost pockets, and avoid poorly-drained or shallow soil.

GROWING- Water apples and pears during dry spells and from when the fruit starts to swell, particularly if they are newly planted or in containers. Established trees will be more resistant to dry spells. In Spring, sprinkle a general fertiliser around the base of the plant.

PRUNING- Both apples and pears should be pruned every year to get the best crop. Timing and method of pruning depends on the type of apple/pear you are growing.

HARVESTING- It is usually quite clear when apples are ready for picking. Normally when you notice a few have fallen off of the tree, then it's a good sign the fruit is ready. With pears, it's best to harvest them before they are fully ripe, and they benefit from a period of storage for ripening before eating. To pick, simply cup the apple/pear in your hand, raise slightly and twist gently.



PLUMS

Plums are delicious, (especially when made into jams, pies and crumbles!). There are varieties available that don't take up a lot of space so that even the smallest of gardens can have a plum tree.

PLANTING- Plums have quite high moisture demands, but also need to be well drained as plums hate waterlogged soils. Add bulky organic matter to sandy or chalky soils prior to planting. As the flowers on plum trees are so delicate, positioning the tree in a sunny, sheltered spot will produce the best results.

GROWING- Fruit set is generally finished by early Summer,

after which the fruits start to swell significantly. Once fruit has set, they may need thinning to ease congestion and weight in the canopy, as well as to boost fruit size. It is often essential to prop up branches in mid-late Summer, as fruit weight can otherwise snap them. Yields can be greatly increased by appropriate and timely feeding and watering.

PRUNING- Pruning should be carried out in Spring or Summer. Avoid pruning in the dormant season or in mid to late Autumn, as there is risk of infection from silver leaf disease and bacterial canker.

HARVESTING- Plums develop their best flavour if left to ripen on the tree. If they feel soft when gently squeezed, they are ripe. Trees will generally need picking over several times.



CHERRIES

Sweet cherries produce delicious fruit and are usually grown as small open trees, or trained as fans against walls or fences. Acid cherries are self-fertile, tolerate some shade and are ideal for a north-facing wall. Their fruits are tart to taste when eaten raw, but excellent for jam and pie-fillers.

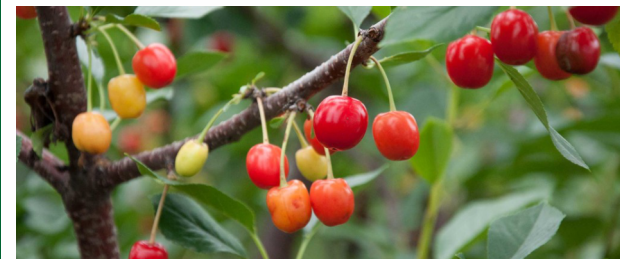
PLANTING- Cherries prefer deep, fertile and well-drained soil with pH 6.5-6.7. They grow particularly well against sunny walls in gardens. Plant cherries from November to Spring.

GROWING- Sweet cherries are semi-vigorous, and can grow around 20-26ft tall, meaning they are best grown as fans, however acid cherries are less vigorous, growing to 10-12ft. If frost is predicted, protect cherry flowers by covering with horticultural fleece. In mid-Spring they benefit from a top-dressing of a general fertiliser. Keep trees well watered during the early stages of fruit development.

PRUNING- The pruning of cherry trees depends on the form and type that they are. Create a balance between older fruiting wood and younger replacement branches. Do formative pruning in Spring as buds begin to open, and prune established trees in the Summer.

HARVESTING- Cherries bruise easily, so ensure you pick

fruit from the stalk. Sweet cherries are wonderful eaten fresh, or store them in the fridge in a sealed container for up to a week. Create delicious pies, jams and crumbles with acid cherries, as they are too tart to eat raw.



BLACKBERRIES

Cultivated blackberries are more productive than the wild variety, and can easily be trained along wires, trellis and fences. Delicious eaten raw or made into preserves and desserts...

PLANTING- Blackberries will be most productive in a sunny but sheltered site, however they can tolerate light shade. Plant in moisture-retentive, free-draining soil, and improve bad quality soil with plenty of organic matter if necessary. If planting more than one plant together, ensure they have plenty of space (depending on the vigour of the plant). Plants will need a sturdy support system, so grow against a wall or fence with horizontal wires spaced 45cm apart.

GROWING- In mid-Spring, top-dress blackberries with general-purpose fertiliser. Ensure you water young plants every 7-10 days during dry spells, and every 10-14 days for mature plants. The fruit on mature plants will benefit from the extra watering.

PRUNING- Blackberry bush pruning is usually carried out after harvesting in Summer or Autumn. As the new canes start growing the following Spring and Summer, they need to be tied into their supports.

HARVESTING- Best picked as soon as they are ripe, from mid-Summer onwards. Eat fresh, or create delicious jams, deserts and jellies.

