



*Growing* **SMALL FRUITS**

*in Eastern Oregon*

**HOME GARDENS**

*By O. T. McWhorter*



Oregon State System of Higher Education  
Federal Cooperative Extension Service  
Oregon State College  
Corvallis

## SMALL FRUIT VARIETIES FOR EASTERN OREGON

*Lower Altitude*  
(Long season areas)

*High Altitude*  
(Short season areas)

*Strawberries—Spring Bearing*

Marshall (Oregon)  
Corvallis  
Premier  
Dorsett  
Catskill

(Single crop strawberries not generally recommended)

*Strawberries—Everbearing*

Mastodon  
Gem  
Rockhill (Wayzata)

Mastodon  
Gem  
Rockhill

*Red Raspberries*

Newburgh  
Taylor  
Chief

Latham  
Chief  
Ruddy

*Red Raspberries—Fall Bearing*

Ranere (St. Regis)

Ranere (St. Regis)

*Black Raspberries*

Munger  
Plum Farmer  
Cumberland  
Bristol  
Naples

(Black raspberries not recommended)

*Trailing Berries (dewberry types)*

Boysenberry  
Youngberry

(Usually not adapted)

*Upright Blackberries*

Mersereau  
Blowers  
Snyder

(Not adapted)

*Gooseberries*

Oregon Champion  
Downing  
Houghton

Pixwell  
Abundance

*Currants*

Perfection  
Cherry  
Fay  
Red Lake

Red Lake

# Growing Small Fruits in Eastern Oregon Home Gardens

By

O. T. McWHORTER, Extension Horticulturist\*

**H**OME gardeners of eastern Oregon usually go without small fruits unless they grow their own. Now, under war conditions, less of the small fruits can be expected to find their way into this area. Small fruit plantings should be a part of every home garden where there is space for them, time for their care, and the climate suitable for their production.

## SOILS FOR SMALL FRUITS

Soils considered suitable for gardening are usually adapted to small fruits production. Irrigation should be used for small fruits if available, and if irrigation is needed for garden crops in the area. Irrigation is always a requisite for best results with everbearing berries.

Avoid soils showing a high degree of alkalinity. Small fruits thrive best in soils free from alkali. Small fruits, especially strawberries, will not grow successfully, if at all, in strongly alkaline soils.

Add organic matter to the soil before planting small fruits. Eight to ten tons or loads of barnyard manure per acre may be worked into the soil, or cover crops may be grown and plowed under just before planting time. It is a waste of time to plant small fruits on poorly drained or worn-out soils.

Prepare the soil as for garden crops. For best results with small fruits, avoid planting on land that has just been in sod. Sod is apt to have an accumulation of root-destroying insects.

Black raspberries, and often red raspberries, should not follow such crops as potatoes, tomatoes, or eggplant. Wilt diseases common to all these crops sometimes hold over in the soil to attack the roots of raspberry plants.

## SMALL FRUIT VARIETIES FOR EASTERN OREGON

The length of the growing season and the severity of winter varies greatly in the different sections of eastern Oregon. These

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differences may be wide in the same region because of the variation in altitude. It is difficult to recommend varieties for each and every locality. Suggestions are made here for two extremes of growing conditions. One for long season areas where such crops as sweet corn and tomatoes mature and the other for regions where late spring and early fall frosts prevent maturing of sweet corn and tomatoes.

Success with new plantings of any of the small fruits often depends upon the carefulness with which the dealer, or selling agency, and the purchaser handle and care for planting stock. Planting stock handled carelessly before or after planting often has little chance for successful cropping. Planting stock should be well rooted and so handled as to prevent drying or deterioration after the plants are dug and before they are set in the field. Weak plants should be discarded.

### PLANTING DISTANCES FOR SMALL FRUITS

*Raspberries*—3 to 4 feet apart in rows. Rows 7 to 8 feet apart.

*Strawberries*—18 to 24 inches apart. Rows 3½ feet apart.

*Currants*—4 to 6 feet apart. Rows 6 to 8 feet apart.

*Boysenberries and Youngberries*—Wire trellis, rows 6 to 8 feet apart, hills 10 to 12 feet apart.

Staked rows, 5 feet apart each way.

*Gooseberries*—4 to 5 feet apart. Rows 6 to 8 feet apart.

Do not crowd. Give the plants a chance by allowing them room to grow.

### STRAWBERRIES

**Spring bearing varieties.** Where late spring frosts do not kill the blossoms the Marshall (Oregon) variety produces early high quality fruit for the home garden. The Dorsett is a satisfactory high quality strawberry grown some at Milton, Oregon. Premier is an early productive sort less subject to frost injury and has been grown in Union and Malheur counties. The Catskill is a relatively new midseason variety that has been satisfactory in some trials. The Corvallis has been successful in trials under irrigation at Milton in Umatilla County, Kimberly in Grant County, and in Eagle Valley in Baker County. The Narcissa is one of the earliest strawberries, but late spring frosts often kill the blossoms. Where late frosts are prevalent it may be advisable to grow slightly later bearing varieties. The Ulrich or Improved Clarke strawberry has been in favor under irrigation at The Dalles and at Hood River.

**Everbearing strawberries.** Where the growing season is short and late spring frosts kill the blossoms of the spring bearing strawberry varieties, the everbearing strawberries are recommended because they bear fruit in late summer and early fall.

The Mastodon and Gem varieties of everbearers are reliable for most locations. The Rockhill everbearer has the best quality fruit of these three varieties, but it is not as well adapted to all locations and conditions. A fertile soil is needed for the Rockhill variety.

Everbearing strawberries should be reset annually. Planting is done usually in late winter or early spring. Planting stock of everbearing strawberries is obtained by crown division of mother plants or from runner plants. Runner plants are obtained from the Mastodon and Gem varieties, but the Rockhill produces very few runners, hence planting stock is obtained by crown division.

### CANE FRUITS

**Red raspberries.** The Latham variety is hardy and generally adapted to all of eastern Oregon except where only the everbearing red raspberry varieties will produce. Newer varieties such as the Newburgh and Taylor bear higher quality fruit and are proving hardy enough to warrant trials in eastern Oregon. The Ruddy, a new berry from North Dakota, should be tried.

The Ranere (St. Regis) often referred to as an everbearer, should be grown in areas where late spring frosts kill the fruit of the Latham and Ruddy varieties. The Ranere produces fruit in the summer and early fall.

**Black raspberries.** Black raspberry varieties are not recommended for the high altitude areas having a severe winter climate. The Munger, Plum Farmer, and Cumberland varieties can be grown in the longer season areas. New promising New York State varieties such as the Bristol, Naples, Dundee, and Evans may be more desirable than the three older varieties.

**Trailing berries (dewberry types).** Most varieties of this type are not hardy enough for even the milder sections of eastern Oregon. The Boysen and Young are the most hardy of this group, but even they should be covered with straw during winter in practically all sections of eastern Oregon.

**Upright blackberries.** Berries of this type are not hardy in the higher altitudes. In the more favored locations such varieties as Mersereau, Blowers, and Snyder may be satisfactory.

## GOOSEBERRIES AND CURRANTS

Gooseberries are fairly well adapted to most parts of eastern Oregon. Varieties are Oregon Champion, Downing, and Houghton. In the higher altitudes the new North Dakota varieties, Pixwell and Abundance, may be more hardy.

Currants, like gooseberries, are generally adapted. The principal varieties recommended are Perfection, Cherry, Fay, and Red Lake. Red Lake is a recent introduction from Minnesota and is reported especially hardy.

## PLANTING AND CARE

**Strawberries.** Strawberry planting stock should be obtained from sources free from such destructive virus diseases as "yellows," "crinkle," and from the root diseases known as "red stele" or "brown core."

Strawberry plants are usually set out in late winter or early spring after soils have dried sufficiently so that they do not puddle or bake when worked.

Strawberry plants should be set with the crowns even with the ground line. When the crown is set high or above the ground, the plants dry out and often die; when set too low or with the crown covered, the plant often rots. The strawberry roots should be spread out in the soil in an opening large enough to take the roots without folding or doubling. Press the soil firmly about the roots. Cultivation throughout the lifetime of the planting should be shallow to avoid disturbing the roots, and often enough to keep out competing weeds.

There are insects of strawberries to combat such as spittle bug, root weevils, and crown borers. Directions for fighting these pests may be had on request from the Oregon State College Extension Service, Corvallis, Oregon, or from county agents.

**Raspberries.** Black and purple raspberries are propagated by tip layerage in the early fall. These tip layers are cut off about 6 inches above the ground just before digging in the spring, and the new plants are set only about 1 inch deeper than they grew as tip layers.

Red raspberry plants are obtained from sprouts or shoots that grow from roots as suckers. The young tender suckers growing from the red raspberry are often removed from the main plantings in the spring when they have reached a height of 8 to 10 inches.

These shoots may be set in a nursery row to grow for one season; water, if possible, to get best growth results. Drying winds at transplanting time for these tender plants usually cause failure. Sometimes the young shoots are set directly in the permanent planting, but they must be handled carefully because they are very immature and tender. The usual method of obtaining red raspberry planting stock is to dig the 1-year-old suckers from the parent planting in late winter or early spring. Cut back the plants to 6 inches or less in length and set them slightly deeper than they grew in the mother planting.

Renovate red raspberry plantings immediately after fruiting by cutting out and removing the old canes from the field. Neglected raspberry plantings become overcrowded and dwarfed, and fruit production and quality are lowered. Reduce the canes to 8 to 12 strong canes per hill. This will permit new canes to harden before winter sets in and will remove old diseased canes from the field. Prune red raspberries to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 feet in the spring or after severe winter weather has passed. This late pruning may avoid serious winter killing of topped canes.

Black raspberry plantings are thinned to 4 or 6 strong canes. Weak canes should be removed. Black raspberry plants are pruned by cutting off 3 or 4 inches of the top when the new canes are 28 or 30 inches high. The growing new canes will then branch. At the end of the winter season of the approaching fruiting year, the side branches or laterals of the black raspberry are cut back to 5 to 7 buds. On very vigorous growths, 10 or 12 buds can be left.

**Trailing berries.** Boysenberries and Youngberries are propagated by tip layerage. The tips of canes are covered with soil in the early fall. The rooted tips are cut off within 4 to 6 inches of the ground in the spring when they are dug for transplanting. Planting procedure is the same as for black raspberries.

The Boysenberry may be trained to wire trellises or to stakes with a 3-foot crossarm 5 feet from the ground. The canes are tied to the stakes, divided at the top, and tied to each arm of the crossarm to form a "T" head. Get a copy of Oregon State College Extension Circular 356 "Suggestions for Training Boysenberries and Youngberries."

**Upright blackberries.** Cultural practice for these berries is similar to that given red raspberries.

**Gooseberries and currants.** Planting stock of gooseberries and currants may be obtained from nurserymen. They may be pro-

pagated by means of layers or cuttings. Currants are propagated almost entirely by cuttings made from vigorous shoots of the current season's growth. Spring planting is the usual practice for currants and gooseberries.

Rows of currants and gooseberries should be 6 feet apart for cultivation with a one-horse cultivator. Set plants 4 to 6 feet apart in rows. Four feet apart in rows is the usual distance unless plants are apt to become very large.

Pruning of young plants of currants and gooseberries consists in removing superfluous branches. Do not overprune. Prune in late winter or early spring before growth starts. Pruning plants 3 years old or older consists in removing all the branches more than 3 years old and leaving just enough 1-year-old wood to replace them.

## REFERENCES

Get copies of Oregon publications at the office of the county agent of your county. The Farmers' Bulletins listed below may be obtained free from Division of Publications, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Oregon Station Bulletin 357, "Insect Pests of the Strawberry in Oregon."

Oregon Station Bulletin 488, "Crown Division of Everbearing Strawberries."

Oregon Station Circular of Information 162, "Gooseberry and Currant Diseases."

Oregon Station Circular of Information 200, "Spittle Bug on Strawberries."

Oregon Extension Circular 328, "After-Harvest Care of Strawberries."

Oregon Extension Circular 356, "Suggestions for Training Youngberries and Boysenberries."

Farmers' Bulletin 887, "Raspberry Culture."

Farmers' Bulletin 901, "Everbearing Strawberries."

Farmers' Bulletin 1027, "Strawberry Culture, Western United States."

Farmers' Bulletin 1398, "Currants and Gooseberries."

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