



# SMALL FRUITS

*for Western 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 WESTERN OREGON

### *Strawberries*

Marshall (Oregon) for a main crop  
Narcissa for an early crop  
Corvallis for a late berry  
Redheart, medium late  
Mastodon, a dependable everbearer  
Gem, another good everbearer  
Rockhill (Wayzata), best quality fruit, but not  
adaptable to all locations

### *Red Raspberries*

Cuthbert, a leader for quality  
Newburgh, hardy and prolific  
Taylor, a new hardy sort

### *Black Raspberries*

Plum Farmer  
Munger  
Cumberland

### *Trailing Berries*

Boysenberry  
Youngberry  
Loganberry  
Cascade  
Pacific

### *Gooseberries*

Oregon Champion  
Downing  
Houghton

### *Currants*

Perfection  
Cherry  
Fay

# Small Fruits for Western Oregon Home Gardens

By

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**H**OME garden small fruit plantings are more important than ever because of wartime changes in production, consumption, and distribution of food crops. It may become more and more difficult and costly to obtain small fruits for home use during the war. Small fruit plantings should be a part of home gardens where there is space for them and time for their care.

Cane fruits have an important place in the home garden where there is space for them. The cane fruits bear lightly the second year after planting, and come into full bearing the third and following years. Soil requirements are the same as for other small fruits.

## SOILS FOR SMALL FRUITS

An easily worked, well-drained, fertile soil should be selected for small fruit plantings. Those soils suitable for successful home gardening will produce small fruits satisfactorily, provided they are free from standing water and are well drained during the late fall and winter months. 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.

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. 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.

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\* Acknowledgment is made to George F. Waldo, associate pomologist, United States Department of Agriculture, cooperating with the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, for his assistance in preparing this circular.

## STRAWBERRIES

**Spring bearing strawberries.** The Marshall variety is a leading dessert strawberry. It yields well and has an excellent flavor. The Marshall is suitable for the main crop berry in the home garden. The Narcissa is an early bearing variety of good quality and is just ahead of the Marshall in production. The Corvallis, a late bearer, is a canning variety that can be used as a dessert berry. The Redheart has been quite popular along the southwest coast of Oregon.

Vigorous strawberry plants of the spring bearing varieties should yield 1 pound of fruit per plant per season. The yield will be less when the plants and soils are poor. Under average conditions, a planting of strawberries should yield for 2 to 4 years.

**Everbearing strawberries.** For many home gardens, the everbearing strawberry is a favorite, because it bears in late summer and early fall. Irrigation is necessary for favorable crops from everbearing strawberries, since the berries are produced during the dry late summer and fall period.

The Mastodon and Gem varieties of everbearers are reliable for most locations. The Rockhill everbearer has the best fruit quality 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 usually done 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 should be used if available. The Rockhill produces very few runners; hence new plants are obtained mostly by crown division. For the best crops of berries in August and September, keep the blossoms removed from everbearing strawberries until late June. Stronger plants are formed when these early blossoms are removed.

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

**Planting.** Strawberries are usually set 24 inches apart in rows 42 inches apart. Hills may be closer together, and rows may be 3 feet apart where hand tools are used in cultivation. It is best not to crowd the plants.

Strawberry plants are 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 can be set in the fall. An advantage of fall planting is that the plants will bear fruit earlier. Successive freezing and thawing during the winter is very often destructive to

fall-planted strawberries unless they have grown enough to establish root systems in their new location.

**Setting plants.** 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 obtained from the Oregon State College Extension Service, Corvallis, Oregon, or from county agents.

## RASPBERRIES

**Red raspberries.** The Cuthbert red raspberry is the popular variety because of the high quality fruit it produces. Other varieties often yield more abundantly and have proved hardier, but the fruit from them lacks the flavor the Cuthbert variety possesses. The Newburgh red raspberry has been found hardy and very productive at the John Jacob Astor Experiment Station in Clatsop County, Oregon; the Cuthbert was practically a failure in their trials. The Newburgh variety therefore is to be recommended for the coast areas. The Newburgh produces attractive fruit of fair quality. The Taylor red raspberry is another variety worthy of trial. Plant raspberries in rows 6 to 8 feet apart with hills  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 feet apart. Hills 5 feet apart each way are satisfactory in a home garden.

**Black raspberries.** A black raspberry variety popular in Oregon is the Plum Farmer. The Munger is a high quality black raspberry, but it is subject to mildew. Cumberland is a third variety that may be chosen for home planting. Planting distances are the same as for the red raspberry.

**Pruning and training.** 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.

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

Raspberry plants are sometimes set in the early fall. When severe winter weather occurs before the roots of these fall-planted plants establish themselves in their new location, the plants may fail to survive. Early spring planting is the usual practice of growers.

## TRAILING BERRIES

**Boysenberry** is today the standard all purpose variety of the trailing types for home gardens. It has large size, fine quality with medium acidity, heavy yield, and is quite hardy.

**Youngberry** is similar to Boysenberry but has less acid, generally less yield, and is sometimes less hardy.

**Loganberry** has long been the standard commercial variety in Oregon. It is quite acid and has a very fine characteristic flavor. Its

yield is heavy and it is usually hardy under western Oregon conditions.

**Cascade** and **Pacific** are two varieties of trailing berries recently introduced in Oregon that show promise for home gardens. They have a characteristic flavor similar to the so-called Oregon wild blackberry.

All trailing berries 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.

**Training and pruning.** Home gardens with only a few hills of trailing berries may have stakes 5 to 6 feet high with a 3-foot crossarm at the top to hold the vines, set in rows 5 feet apart each way. The canes are tied to the stakes and then divided at the top and tied to each arm of the crossarm to form a "T" head. Excessive overhanging growth may be cut off.

For wire trellising of trailing berries get a copy of Extension Circular 356.

Starting in the spring, the new growth is divided in half and trained each way from the crown along the row. Short stakes or wires are driven into the ground to hold the new vines in place. The new canes must be carefully protected from damage during cultivation and picking operations for maximum production the following year.

After harvest, usually in August, the old canes are cut off close to the ground and removed from the planting. Some growers report that they get better crops from training the new canes in late August or early September before they harden. Other growers train in the spring and take their loss due to cane breakage and interference with canes after they have hardened.

**Caution.** Mild winters are favorable to fall training. When severe winter weather prevails, however, with continued freezing and thawing, winter injury can occur to fall-trained canes. When the winter is extremely wet, on the other hand, many buds are often killed when canes are left on the ground for spring training.

**The leaf spot disease**, which affects foliage, canes, and fruit of Boysenberry, Youngberry, and Loganberry must be controlled on plantings along the coast. Directions for the control of leaf and cane spot of cane fruits is given in Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station Circular of Information 246.

## CURRANTS AND GOOSEBERRIES

The Oregon Champion is the variety of the gooseberry grown for commercial purposes. Other varieties are the Downing and Houghton.

The Perfection, Cherry, and Fay are recommended varieties of currants. Two or three pounds of fruit per plant may be expected from mature plantings of currants and gooseberries. Currants and gooseberries are very hardy and withstand low temperatures.

Planting stock of gooseberries may be obtained from nurserymen. They may be propagated 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 Farmer's 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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Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics

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Oregon State College and United States Department of Agriculture, Cooperating  
Printed and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914