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Yard 'n' Garden



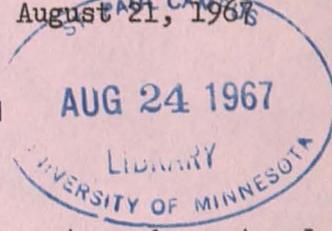
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PRUNING RASPBERRIES

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Raspberry plantings in many gardens are allowed to grow to a dense tangle of old and new canes. In such patches the berries are not only hard to pick but they are usually small, crumbly and of poor quality. The dense growth often interferes with air circulation and as a result more disease problems arise.

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To do a good job of pruning, you should know something about the growth habit of raspberry plants. The raspberry is a perennial and the roots or underground portion lives for several years without planting. The canes or the above-ground portion, however, is biennial. They come up one year, produce vegetative growth and overwinter. The second year they produce lateral branches which flower and bear fruit. After fruiting the canes die.

Pruning therefore should consist of cutting out all old canes that have borne fruit. Thinning out the new canes coming up for the first time should be another part of the pruning job. There are usually more of these new canes than you will want.

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If you grow raspberries in a long row or hedge, thin the new plants to about three or four per foot of row. If you grow raspberries in hills, thin out the hills to about six to eight strong canes per hill. Always save the sturdy, strong, straight canes.

The best time to prune raspberries is immediately after harvest. Cut canes with a small hand pruning shears right at the ground line. If your patch hasn't been pruned for some time, pruning will be difficult and you may find the canes very sharp and prickly. Once the canes are pruned and thinned out, though, the job will be fairly easy if you do it each summer after harvest.

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