

GOOSEBERRIES, REDCURRANTS AND WHITECURRANTS

Fruit mostly on old wood and pruning aims to control the shape of the bush, keep the centre open and increase the number of fruiting branches.

After planting and each winter thereafter, cut back all main shoots by about half and lateral shoots to about 2 or 3 buds. At the same time remove any broken, very weak or crossing shoots, any suckers that might have developed from the 'leg' and any branches crowding the centre. Make each cut to an outward-facing bud, unless you are pruning a gooseberry that has a rather drooping habit, in which case cut to an upward pointing bud.

The formation of fruit buds will be encouraged if you also summer prune lateral shoots to 5 leaves at the end of June.

RHUBARB

Rhubarb will grow in almost any soil, in full sun or partial shade provided it does not become waterlogged in winter, but best results will be obtained on fertile soils, so dig in plenty of well-rotted organic matter, like farmyard manure or garden compost. Just before planting, rake in a dressing of balanced fertiliser, such as growmore, to help plants establish.

Set plants 90cm (3ft) apart each way and with the growing point 2.5cm (1in) below the soil surface. After refilling with moist soil, firm in each plant.

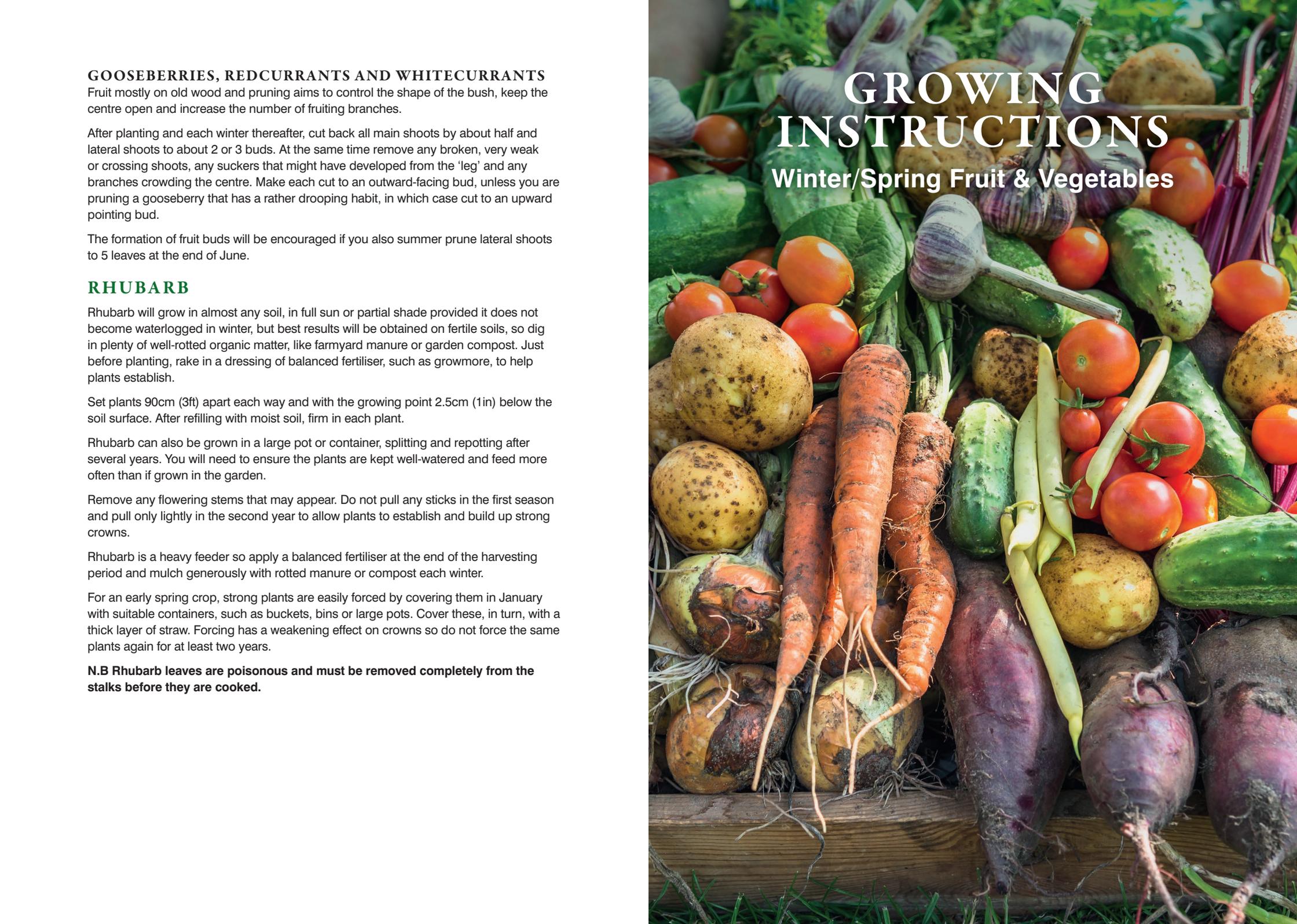
Rhubarb can also be grown in a large pot or container, splitting and repotting after several years. You will need to ensure the plants are kept well-watered and feed more often than if grown in the garden.

Remove any flowering stems that may appear. Do not pull any sticks in the first season and pull only lightly in the second year to allow plants to establish and build up strong crowns.

Rhubarb is a heavy feeder so apply a balanced fertiliser at the end of the harvesting period and mulch generously with rotted manure or compost each winter.

For an early spring crop, strong plants are easily forced by covering them in January with suitable containers, such as buckets, bins or large pots. Cover these, in turn, with a thick layer of straw. Forcing has a weakening effect on crowns so do not force the same plants again for at least two years.

N.B Rhubarb leaves are poisonous and must be removed completely from the stalks before they are cooked.



GROWING INSTRUCTIONS

Winter/Spring Fruit & Vegetables

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR ORDER!

Your plants, bulbs and tubers have been carefully grown for you by our specialist growers and sent at just the right time for planting or potting on. Please unpack and check your order carefully and contact us within seven days if there are any problems.



GROWING TIPS:

- Unpack your order immediately and stand plants upright.
- Store tubers and bulbs in a cool, light, well ventilated and frost-free place, away from direct sunlight and chit potatoes before planting if required.
- Plants supplied as bare roots are lifted from the nursery field when dormant and sent to you from late autumn and through the spring for immediate planting. Do not allow bareroots to dry out; if they look dry upon receipt soak in a bucket of water for up to an hour.
- Choose and prepare an area of soil ahead of planting. Remove weeds, dig in compost or manure, add a dressing of a balanced fertiliser and break the soil down to a crumbly texture.
- Avoid planting when soils are too wet or frozen.
- Keep all plants well-watered until they are fully established.

A FEW THINGS ABOUT YOUR PLANTS...

Please do not be alarmed if your plants have died back or dropped their leaves – it's perfectly natural for this time of the year. Your plants have been grown to order and have well developed root systems which will enable them to establish quickly once planted in their final positions – this is the most important part of your plant.

We cut back many of our plants at certain times of the year. We do this for several reasons, but in the main, it helps to ensure they travel well, are quicker to establish once planted and keeps your plants looking clean and healthy.

ONION & SHALLOT SETS AND GARLIC BULBS

After unpacking if you are not ready to plant immediately store them in a cool, light, well-ventilated and frost-free place, away from direct sunlight. Winter hardy varieties can be planted in September through to December, otherwise plant between February and April, as soon as the soil is sufficiently dry and warm; in practice this is usually late winter or early spring for sandy soils and mid-spring for clay-based soils. Heat-treated sets (which have had their flowering potential suppressed and so are bolt resistant) should not be planted before late March or April.

Onion and shallot sets are placed into a shallow drill (groove) in the soil and covered or push each one into the soil. Tips should sit just about at soil level. Spacing can be anything from 2.5-10cm (1in-4in) apart, depending on the size of bulbs planted and the size of the bulbs required at harvest, 5-7.5cm (2-3in) usually works well.

Garlic bulbs can be given the same treatment, but they require deeper planting. Split your bulbs into cloves and plant each clove 2.5cm (1in) below the soil surface and generally around 10cm (4in) apart. Elephant garlic needs increased spacing to 30cm (12in) apart.

Keep free of weeds during the growing season. Mulch in spring to suppress weeds and water if necessary. Apply a high nitrogen feed to soils ahead of planting and to autumn planted crops to kick start growth in the spring.

As soon as the leaves turn yellow you can begin to harvest; lift carefully and leave to dry in the sun if the weather is warm or indoors if the weather is wet. Handle gently as they are easily bruised.

POTATOES

After unpacking, store your tubers in a cool, light, well-ventilated and frost-free place, away from direct sunlight.

Potatoes can be divided into five categories, planted from March to early August,

1. First Earlies – Ready June to July (earlier in some sheltered areas)
2. Second Earlies – Ready July to August
3. Early Maincrops – Ready August onwards
4. Late Maincrop – Ready September onwards
5. Second Cropping / Late Cropping – Ready September to December

All seed potatoes, particularly earlies and second earlies, benefit from chitting (pre-sprouting) over several weeks before planting. Place them out, blunt end uppermost, in single layers in seed trays or in egg boxes. Place in a light, cool, well-ventilated place to encourage the development of shoots 2-2.5cm (¾-1in) long. Later cropping potatoes are less likely to need chitting as warmer soil temperatures can make a greater difference.



Please note a few of our varieties start to chit (shoot) quite early in the season when you receive them, please rest assured this is totally fine. Some years this happens more than others, especially if there have been warm temperatures at both harvest time and in the autumn/early winter. Several varieties are also notorious for early sprouting, so despite our best efforts and that of our growers, they are off to a very quick start. These shoots are easily knocked off when handled, the tubers will benefit when that early shoot is knocked off, so please do so once you receive them if they are large because it encourages all the eyes to open, many strong chits to form and makes for a better crop when planted.

SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Potatoes thrive in deep, fertile, well drained soils. Soil conditions prior to planting are more important than precise planting times. Prepare the soil well before planting, breaking down any clumps and adding fertiliser or manure. Planting too early in cold, wet soils may cause rotting. We recommend you delay planting until the soil is both warm and moist to touch. In most areas this is in the March to May period.

Plant individual seed potatoes with a trowel or dig a 12-15cm (5-6in) deep trench and set at the recommended spacings below and cover. Protect the emerging shoots from later frosts by earthing up (carefully drawing soil over the shoot tips). Regular earthing up during the season will also encourage larger yields and prevent tubers from turning green.

POTATO PLANTING GUIDE

20 tubers will plant -	Extra & First Earlies	Second Earlies	Maincrop	Second cropping
Area covered	6m (20ft)	7.4m (25ft)	9m (30ft)	6m (20ft)
Planting in row distance	30cm (12in) apart	36cm (14in) apart	45cm (18in) apart	30cm (12in) apart
Distance between rows	60cm (2ft)	60cm (2ft)	75cm (2.5ft)	60cm (2ft)
Plant from	From early March	From March	From early April	From June
Recommended final planting date	Late May	Late May	Mid May	Early August
Harvest time after planting (approx)	10-15 weeks	13 weeks	16-20 weeks	10 weeks

SECOND CROPPING / LATE CROPPING VARIETIES

As the weather turns colder (October), start to protect plants at night and on colder days with fleece. Plants should still be left uncovered on milder days. Straw placed around plants in November will give additional protection in any severe weather. Even when mature, late cropping potatoes keep best if left in the soil and should be dug as needed right up to Christmas and even into the New Year.

PLANTING IN CONTAINERS (POTATO KITS)

Plant 5 tubers per planter – our patio planters have a 40litre capacity. For smaller containers simply plant less tubers. Plant approximately halfway down in the planter and cover, when the shoots reach 15cm (6in) tall, add another 10cm (4in) layer of compost on the top. This prevents light from reaching the tubers and stops them turning green. Repeat the process of earthing up as the stems lengthen - just leave enough uncovered to allow some leaves to absorb sunlight and grow.



Place the container in a bright, frost-free, sheltered position and keep well-watered. Because potatoes are heavy feeders supply a good quality plant food throughout the season.

BLIGHT MANAGEMENT - Blight rapidly develops from droplets carried on the wind to form a brown or black circular patch called a lesion. The lesions have a soft, wet appearance and if formed on leaves will show white fungal threads on the underside. Once more than a third of the foliage is infected it is best to remove all foliage off site because the tubers will have stopped growing anyway. This is why first and second earlies are popular, because they largely avoid blight if they harvested early enough.

Sarpo varieties have become increasingly popular in recent years as well as a number of new varieties which have been bred and developed for their unique blight resistance.

VEGETABLE PLANTS

WHAT TO DO FIRST

Sending young plants by post may cause them a little stress, so unpack them immediately and, if dry, stand them for a few minutes in about 2.5cm (1in) of water, until the compost is fully moist again. You may notice a slight yellowing of the foliage or that they look a little drawn, but this is quite natural after they have been in a dark box and is nothing to be worried about, they will soon recover.

PLANTING OUT - POTTED PLANTS

If growing in containers the minimum size pot that is suitable is a 10ltr and if using a grow bag, plant a maximum of two plants per bag. All tomato varieties that are classed as indeterminate will need some training so the side shoots will need pinching out and the main stem supporting. Once the main stem reaches 1.8m (6ft) pinch out the growing tip. Water and feed regularly with a balanced tomato fertilizer and harvest the fruits as they ripen.

Greenhouse Varieties Our tomato, cucumber, melon and pepper plants have been nurtured on the nursery for several months, so that you receive large, bushy 9cm potted plants ready for immediate potting on or planting out.

Grafted plants Plant them into pots, a greenhouse border or outside after it has been prepared by digging in lots of organic material. The grafted union must be kept above the soil level to ensure suckers and adventitious roots do not develop.

Outdoor Varieties Many of these plants are intolerant of frost, in mild areas they can be planted out immediately, but it is advisable to keep some fleece handy just in case there are still any chilly nights.

PLANTING OUT - BRASSICAS

Be sure to plant seedlings firmly. In areas where cabbage root fly is prevalent it is advisable to at first protect them in some way, such as by covering with enviromesh or by placing 'collars' around the bases of the stems. Ensure plants are protected from cabbage white butterflies with netting or mesh to ensure they remain free of caterpillars.



BRASSICA PLANTING GUIDE

Variety	Within row spacing	Between row spacing
Broccoli & Calabrese	45cm (18in)	45cm (18in)
Brussels Sprouts	60cm (24in)	60cm (24in)
Cabbage	37cm (15in)	37cm (15in)
Cauliflower	45cm (18in)	45cm (18in)
Flower Sprout® /KaleTTes	60cm (24in)	60cm (24in)
Kale	45cm (18in)	45cm (18in)

PLANTING OUT - HERBS

These will arrive potted into 9cm pots with individual care labels. Grow on in a sheltered position, whether you plan to plant in beds, borders or larger containers. Trim regularly to ensure lots of fresh new growth.

FRUIT PLANTS

WHAT TO DO FIRST

After unpacking, inspect your plants and water them if dry. Bareroot plants should be placed in a bucket of water for up to an hour (no longer) to moisten the root system thoroughly before planting.

Plant as soon as possible but, if ground is not ready or is too wet or frosty, delay planting until conditions are more suitable. Potted plants can be retained in their pots in a sheltered place for a while but check them regularly to ensure they do not dry out. Bareroot plants can be temporarily 'heeled' into a shallow trench on a spare patch of ground, covering the roots with moist soil.



SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Choose a sheltered area of the garden, avoiding exposed sites or frost pockets. Although soft fruit do best in full sun, they should also fruit reasonably well in partial shade.

All fruit will require a well-drained, rich, moisture-retentive soil to thrive, so dig over thoroughly and incorporate plenty of well-rotted organic matter like farmyard manure into the soil at the bottom. Generous manuring is particularly important for blackcurrants. Be sure to remove all perennial weeds as you dig and, just before planting, rake in a dressing of balanced fertiliser to give the plants a boost whilst they establish.

For raspberries a slightly acid soil suits them best and on heavy soil they will do better if planted on a raised bed or ridge.

ERICACEOUS VARIETIES: BLUEBERRIES, CRANBERRIES AND LINGONBERRIES

Most importantly these are lime-haters and require a strongly acid soil to thrive. The ground should also be free draining but moisture retentive. Soils overlying chalk or limestone, or which contain free lime will not grow these fruits and, if you have such a soil, they should be grown in containers.

AFTERCARE TIPS

Your bushes will benefit from an annual mulch of organic matter, like well-rotted manure or good quality garden compost, to suppress weeds and conserve soil moisture. Spread it thickly every spring on the surface of the ground while the soil is still moist from winter rain. Each year at the same time, top-dress the plants with some balanced compound fertiliser and a high potash fertiliser to encourage flowering and fruiting.

Since many soft fruits are attacked by birds, particularly when grown on allotments, take this opportunity to provide supports for bird-proof netting. A permanent fruit cage, though initially expensive, is the easiest to manage.

STRAWBERRIES

SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Strawberry beds have a limited life and need to be replaced every 3-5 years with virus-free stock. As they should each time be replanted on a fresh site where they have not been grown for several years, they are best grown as a rotational crop with vegetables rather than being included in a more permanent fruit area. Choose a sheltered area of the garden in full sun and, if possible, avoid known frost pockets.

Bare-root plants arrive with lots of long roots and with short and stumpy leaves above the crown. They may appear unhealthy, but don't worry – these plants will soon spring into life and bear lovely fruits! Set plants 40cm (16in) apart, in rows 1m (3ft) apart. Plant with a trowel, ensuring the roots are well spread out in each planting hole. It is most important to set the crowns just level with the soil surface. After refilling with moist soil, firm in each plant and water well.

AFTERCARE TIPS

If your plants are not growing strongly, particularly if they are spring planted, it is best to de-blossom them in their first season. This may seem hard in the short term but will enable plants to devote all their energies to building strong crowns for future years.

During May and June, strawberry mats or straw, can be gently placed around the plants and under the fruiting trusses. This keeps the fruits clean and reduces rotting.

Ensure crops are covered with a net to prevent the ripening fruits being attacked by birds. If frost is forecast after plants have come into flower, protect them by covering with a fleece layer.

Strawberries suffer more than most other fruit in times of drought. If the weather turns dry at any time after the fruits start to swell, water rows thoroughly about once a week until rainfall returns to normal.

PERPETUAL (EVERBEARING) FRUITING STRAWBERRIES

These varieties start to flower at the same time as other strawberries but continue to produce flowers and fruit until the weather becomes too cold in October.

As the main reason for growing these varieties is to obtain fruit in late summer and autumn, it is recommended that any flowers produced before the end of May are cut off to encourage maximum production of fruit from July onwards.

GROWING IN HANGING BASKETS

Ideal for those with limited space growing strawberries in baskets will also reduce attack from slugs and snails. For a 12in basket use 10 plants. Upon receipt, they can be planted straight away. Incorporate some water-retaining granules and slow-release fertiliser into the compost before planting and ensure they are frequently watered.

RASPBERRIES

PLANTING

Plant in rows 1.8m (6ft) apart, each running north to south to catch maximum sunlight. Plant bare-root canes 40cm (16in) apart, spreading out the roots before firming in the soil around them. The uppermost roots should be no more than 5cm (2in) below the soil since deeper planting will discourage plants from producing new canes this season. Set potted canes so that the top of the rootball will be about 2.5cm (1in) below the soil surface.

For autumn fruiting (primocane) varieties finish by cutting the stem growth back to approximately 30cm (12in) above soil level - this promotes vigorous growth. For summer flowering (floricane) varieties cut down the cane to about 2cm (1in) above ground level in the first spring - this will encourage multiple canes to grow.

Autumn-fruiting plants are strong enough to support themselves while growing tall, but some posts and supporting wires may be needed if they grow and lean towards the sun. Summer fruiting varieties will need support, usually from wire attached to posts fixed at either end of the planting trench.

PRUNING

Summer-fruiting (floricane) varieties carry fruit on wood produced in the previous season. Each year, immediately after you have picked the crop, cut the fruited canes back to the ground. Select the healthiest and most vigorous of the young growth produced in the current season and tie in. You should aim to have 6-8 fruited canes each year per raspberry 'stool' or plant.

Autumn-fruiting (Primocane) varieties are pruned in the same way, cutting the old canes back to soil level each year. However, since these fruit on the current season's wood, prune the canes in February. The strong growth made during spring and summer will carry fruit in the autumn of the same year, at the top of each cane.

AFTERCARE TIPS

Each year in March, at the same time as you mulch, top-dress the plants with some balanced compound fertiliser and a high potash fertiliser to encourage flowering and fruiting.

When you weed round raspberry canes, be careful with the hoe since these are shallow-rooting plants which are easily damaged.

Raspberries need lots of water, with daily watering advisable in hot weather. Adding a mulch keeps moisture in the soil.

BLACKBERRIES, BOYSENBERRIES, LOGANBERRIES, TAYBERRIES, TUMMELBERRIES AND JAPANESE WINEBERRIES

All these berries can be grown very effectively against a wall or fence otherwise support on a system of posts and wires about 1.8m (6ft) in height. Strain four wires horizontally between the posts at 30cm (1ft) intervals.

Plant 2.4-3m (8-10ft) apart, with the top of the rootball slightly below soil level. Finish by cutting the stem growth back to approx. 30cm (12in) above soil level.

PRUNING

Floricane varieties produce fruit on wood which grew last season. In the first season after planting new canes will be produced from the plant base and these should be tied into your support (these are fruiting canes for next year). Meanwhile, new vigorous young canes (which will produce fruit in the third year) will grow from the plant base. Train these straight up the wires, vertically, in the centre of the bush. The finished effect at cropping time should be of a central growth of erect, young replacement stems tied into the wire, with older fruiting stems on either side.

When the older canes have finished fruiting, cut them out and replace them with the young vigorous stems until now bunched together in the centre.

Primocane varieties fruit on current season's growth and are all pruned in the same way, cutting the old canes back to soil level each year. However, since these fruit on the current season's wood, prune the canes in February. The strong growth made during spring and summer will carry fruit in the autumn of the same year.

ARONIA (CHOKEBERRY)

Chokeberry is an easy to grow shrub, for sun or part shade, and plants can tolerate a wide range of soils, even boggy, as they are naturally found in wet swamps. Plants are also resistant to drought, most pests and diseases and pollution.

For best fruit production plant in a sunny spot at approximately 1-1.5m (3-4ft) apart.

In the spring and autumn apply a layer of compost, rotted manure or other fertiliser around the base of the plants.

KIWIS AND KIWIBERRIES

Kiwi fruits are vigorous climbers and can easily reach a great height, although they are best trained on horizontal wires on a warm wall and pruned to keep in check.

When planting, choose the site carefully ensuring you give the plant enough space to develop, as once established, plants are difficult to move. Plant against a fence or up against support wires. For more than one plant, plant 2-3m (6-10ft) apart. Kiwis prefer an acidic, well-drained soil. Choose a sunny position that is sheltered from strong winds.

Apply mulch of organic material, composted bark or compost around the base after planting, avoiding direct contact with the vine to prevent crown rot.

During the first summer ensure the plant does not dry out particularly in windy conditions, check the plants on a regular basis to ensure that the shoots are tied in and feed with a nitrogen feed regularly. Mulch generously in spring, again avoiding direct contact with the vine.

Prune in winter for best fruit production. During the first few years trim occasionally as required. After 3-4 years, the plant should be pruned annually to 8-12 shoots and thin out weak stems. Fruit is borne on 2-3-year-old stems.

The fruits will drop off or pull off easily when they are ripe. You can also harvest when fruits are mature and ripen them off the vine.

HONEYBERRIES

The Honeyberry is a species of Honeysuckle that produces sweet, tasty fruit. The fruit is similar to a blueberry and is produced early in the season; at least two weeks before strawberries. Exceptionally hardy with an eventual height and spread of 3ft.

Honeyberries are not self-fertile and you will need two plants; each a different variety; for pollination and fruit production. Your two bushes are different varieties. Please note the fruit produced in the first few years after planting can be quite small and sour. Having said this fruit produced after the plants are three to four years old will be larger and sweeter.

Plant in any well-drained soil but avoid areas where water lays on the ground after a hard rainfall; they do not tolerate being in very wet soil. For best fruit production plant in a sunny spot at approximately 1-1.5m (4-5 ft). apart, setting the root ball just below the surface of the soil.

In the spring and autumn apply a layer of compost, rotted manure or other fertiliser around the base of the plants.

BLUEBERRIES, CRANBERRIES AND LINGONBERRIES

These plants require an acid soil in a sunny or semi shaded position. In the many areas where the soil is insufficiently acid they are easily grown in containers. Select containers of a size that will allow plenty of room for growth and pot plants individually using an ericaceous compost. In subsequent years re-pot in late autumn or early spring, as necessary. They must never be allowed to run short of water (rainwater preferably).

Plant the bushes 1.5m (5ft) apart for Blueberries, 30cm (1ft) apart for Cranberries and 45cm (18in) for Lingonberries. Refill the hole and firm in, setting each plant with the top of the root-ball at about or slightly below soil level.

These berries will also benefit from annual mulch. Do this every spring while the soil is still moist from winter rain. Each year in March or April apply a lime-free fertiliser at the manufacturers recommended rates. In the case of blueberries an additional 17g m² (½ oz yd²) of sulphate of ammonia can be applied if growth is not very strong and new shoots grow to less than 30cm (12in) in a full season.

When plants are in full growth, feed regularly with an ericaceous liquid feed.

Birds love the fruit too, especially blueberries so ensure plants are protected with netting.

PRUNING

BLUEBERRIES

In the first two winters remove any diseased or damaged shoots and any weak shoots lying on the ground. In subsequent years remove some of the oldest branches (about 1 in 5 of the total) cutting them back to the ground or to a vigorous new shoot close to the ground. With regular pruning your blueberry plants should remain productive for many years producing delicious fruit every summer and with its attractive flowers and glorious autumn foliage your blueberry plant will make a stunning feature in your garden too.

CRANBERRIES

At first the only pruning needed is the removal of shoots damaged during picking. When plants have become fully established, careful thinning of both the prostrate, creeping and upright, fruiting shoots can be done in March to prevent overcrowding.

LINGONBERRIES

These spread slowly by rhizomes to form a ground-covering mat of stems and need little pruning apart from removal of any dead or damaged shoots after fruiting.

CURRANTS, GOOSEBERRIES AND JOSTABERRIES

All varieties can be planted in rows 1.5-1.8m (5-6ft) apart, with plants 1.5m (5ft) apart in the rows. Ensure plants are firmed in well after planting and kept well-watered, especially in their first season to aid their establishment.

Each year in March, at the same time as you mulch, top-dress the plants with some balanced fertiliser and a high potash fertiliser to encourage flowering and fruiting. Blackcurrants also benefit from a high nitrogen feed at this time.

In dry weather, especially on light soils, give bushes a generous watering about every two weeks.

PRUNING

BLACKCURRANTS AND JOSTABERRIES

Fruit best on one-year-old wood and the aim of pruning is to ensure that the oldest wood is continuously replaced with vigorous new growths.

At the end of the first growing season the only pruning needed is to cut out to the base any very thin or weak shoots less than 30cm (12in) long. In later years, pruning consists of removing any straggly and broken branches and between one quarter and one third of the oldest growth, depending on how much new wood there is. New wood is easily distinguished by its lighter colour and pruning can either be carried out after fruiting or in the autumn.