



**Kevin Milaeger**

*Milaeger's*

## Raspberries: It's time for annual pruning

Kevin Milaeger

**This is the time of year** when I like to clean up the raspberry patch. The new growth is starting to show on last year's reddish brown canes, and new off-shoot plants are sprouting directly from the ground. The first thing I do is prune out all the old stems that are dead and will not bear fruit. They are of a grayish color, and if you scratch the bark, you will see there is no green underneath. Cut them off at ground level. Then I look at the remaining canes that are reddish brown. Prune them back if there is any dead wood



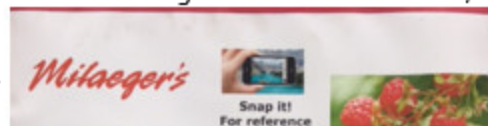
at the stem tips. This is easy to determine----the tips of the stems sometimes don't have any new growth, so I prune the stem back until I see green in the stem, or I prune back to the first green side shoot. The amount of the dieback depends on the severity of the winter. I also like to prune any severely arching canes that might get in the way, or are blocking a walkway. The last thing I do is dig out any new shoots that are emerging where I don't want them. Raspberries are one of the fastest plants in terms of reproduction, so you don't want to let them take over. I usually pot up of a few of the new shoots. They root



**new growth on raspberry canes**

in quickly, and then I give them to friends.

The raspberry variety I have in my garden is 'Heritage.' It is a red fruited, ever-bearing type. That doesn't mean it bears continuously. First fruiting usually starts in July, and continues for about a month. Then the plants rest



and start bearing again in September. The late crop has fruit of a smaller size, and the size diminishes as the season goes on. Still worthwhile, though. In milder years, I have picked fruit in November.

I wrote a thorough guide to raspberry culture in a blog a while back so I am not going to repeat it here. But [here is a link](#) to it, in case you missed it or for those of you who are new to my blog. In addition to the blog, I created a quick reference poster that folks at our store like to use.

## Raspberries

### "How - to tips"

- **6 hours of full sun** minimum.
  - **Soil** - Most soils are acceptable, but - if planting area is soggy and retains water, choose another site or construct a raised bed. If planting area has a lot of clay, work in liberal amounts of compost and some sand.
  - **Fruit** - Raspberries are biennial - they bear fruit on second year canes. New green shoots in spring will bear fruit the following year; they will have turned brown by then. Brown canes that don't show green growth in spring are dead and should be pruned out.
  - **Plant** - about 24" apart. You don't need numerous plants for pollination.
  - **Thin** - In future years, thin out new shoots so the remaining shoots are at least 6" apart.
  - **Fertilize** - use a well balanced fertilizer in moderation.
- For more information see Kevin's blogs at [milaegers.com](http://milaegers.com)



Please email me ([kevin@milaegers.com](mailto:kevin@milaegers.com)) if you have any questions or comments.



raspberry canes

