



No matter which berry is your favorite, all of them like rich, well-drained, acidic soil (very acidic for blueberries), full sun, organic mulch and about 2" of water per week. Even if you haven't decided which berry to grow yet, getting started is as easy as one-two-three. Four and five, too.

1. Select a growing area with full sun.
2. Work the soil 8 to 10 inches deep and add in **Espoma Organic All Purpose Garden Soil**.
3. Mix in lots of rich organic compost – especially if you have sandy or clay soil.
4. Feed with a high-quality organic plant food in the area around the root zone, such as **Espoma Holly-tone®**.
5. Pick when ripe and bursting with flavor – and enjoy.

Berry Good Advice for Gardeners

Let's run through a berry quick overview to help you decide which berry to grow.

Strawberries

Strawberries are perennials (they come up every year). With so many varieties, there's sure to be a strawberry that thrives in your region. Plant in early Spring. You can also grow them in a container. Obtain plants from your favorite local garden center; they know which varieties do well in your area. Space plants about 18" apart. Bury the roots, but not the center crown – it needs lots of light and fresh air and add mulch to retain moisture and discourage weeds. Expect ripe berries about 30 days after the blossoms are pollinated by bees. Strawberries multiply by sending out "runners" or long vine-like shoots.



Raspberries (and blackberries)



Again, get healthy, vigorous plants from a local garden center. Plant in early Spring, spaced about 3 feet apart. Because raspberries send long canes upward as they grow, they will need support. Plant them next to a fence or create a simple support alongside the row with some stakes and wire.

Feed raspberries and blackberries in the Spring and Fall with a high-quality, organic plant food like **Holly-tone**. Water at a rate of about an inch per week and spread organic mulch three to four inches deep around plants. Raspberries ripen Summer through Fall and once they get going, raspberries can produce fruit for years – maybe even indefinitely.

Blueberries

Besides being delicious, blueberries are just what the doctor ordered – they're loaded with healthy antioxidants. Blueberries require soil that is very acidic. You can easily increase the acidity of your soil with safe, non-toxic **Espoma Soil Acidifier**. Blueberry plants come in high bush, low bush or rabbit eye varieties. Space them 6, 2 and 15 feet apart, respectively. Plant in early Spring. Set each plant slightly deeper than it was in its pot. Right after planting, spread a three-inch layer of organic mulch over the ground. Apply two inches of water weekly. Blueberries ripen mid to late Summer.

That covers the basics – but there is one more thing. Remember, you're not the only one who likes berries. You can keep birds away by hanging shiny objects like foil strips or old CDs nearby. When it comes to neighbors and family, you're on your own.

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