

Berry and Grape Monthly Care Cheat Sheet



Month	Grapes	Kiwis	Blueberries	Blackberries	Raspberries
Dec/Jan	Dormant prune. Add Compost/Mulch *Prune before bud swell to avoid energy loss	Dormant prune. Add Compost/Mulch	Remove old canes(4yr+). Add Compost/Mulch	Remove dead canes. Add Compost/Mulch	Cut back primocane types. Remove dead cane on floricanes types. Add Compost/Mulch
Feb	Dormant prune	Dormant prune	Remove old canes(4yr+)	Remove dead canes	Cut back
Mar	Balanced feed starts monthly	Balanced feed starts monthly	Balanced Acid feed starts monthly	Balanced feed starts monthly	Balanced feed starts monthly
Apr	Train shoots	Train vines	Moisture retention, maintain thick mulch level	Train (tip primocanes at 3-4 ft and separate growth)	Train (tip primocanes at 3-4ft and separate growth)
May	Reduce feeding	Reduce feeding	Harvest Begins	Maintain	Maintain
Jun	Stop heavy Feeding	Stop heavy Feeding	Maintain/Harvest	Harvest/ post-harvest feed	Harvest/post-harvest feed
Jul	No Nitrogen, Potassium if yield is heavy	No Nitrogen, Potassium if yield is heavy	Maintain/post-harvest feed	Remove floricanes	Remove fruited canes
Aug	Harvest Begins	Maintain	Stop heavy feed	Train new/Stop heavy feed	Thin rows/stop heavy feed
Sep/Oct	Compost/Mulch	Harvest	No feed	No feed	No feed
Nov	Dormant prep. Clean dead growth and debris around plant	Dormant prep. Clean dead growth and debris around plant	Mulch. Clean dead growth and debris around plant	Dormant prep. Clean up debris and create airflow at base	Dormant prep. Clean up debris and create airflow at base

🍇 GRAPES

Growth Habit

- Woody perennial vine
- Fruits on **new shoots from 1-year-old wood**
- Requires heavy dormant pruning

Spacing(Tradition Rows)

- Plants: **8-10 ft apart**
- Rows: **10-12 ft**

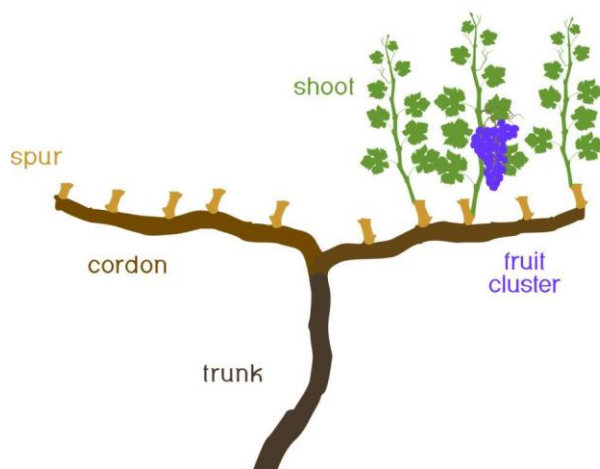
Spacing(Hodge's stake method)

- Plants: **5-6 ft apart**
- Offset Rows: **3-5 ft**

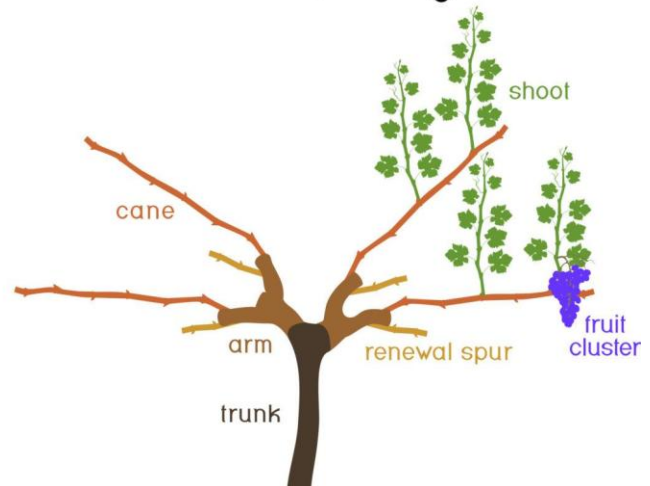
Key Principles

- Keep permanent arms on the trellis/stake
 - Cut last year's shoots back to **2-3 buds(spur pruning)**
 - Remove **80-90% of growth annually**
- ✓ Heavy winter pruning = better fruit quality
- ✓ Too much wood = excess shading and weaker fruit

spur pruning



cane pruning



🍈 KIWIS

Growth Habit

- Extremely vigorous woody vine
- Fruits on **new shoots from last year's wood**

Spacing

- Home Garden: **12-15 ft apart**
- Rows: **15-18 ft**

Pruning Concept

- Similar to grapes but **more aggressive pruning is required.**

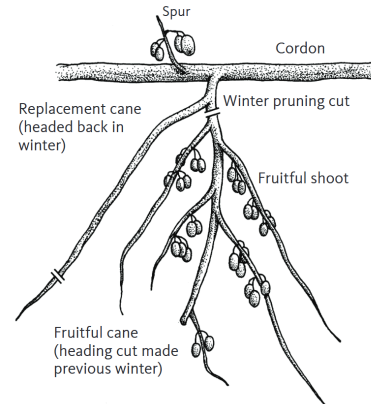
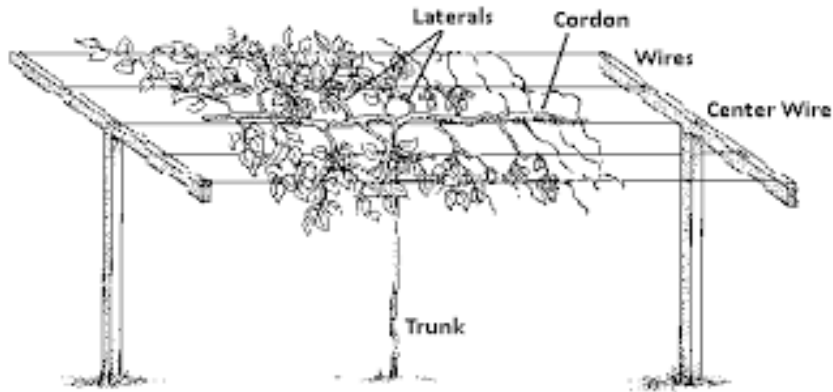
Maintain:

- Permanent trunk
- Permanent horizontal arms

- Annual fruiting canes

*Kiwis can grow **20+ ft of new growth in one season.**

- ✓ Heavy pruning maintains fruit size
- ✓ Light pruning leads to excessive canopy and small fruit



BLUEBERRIES

Growth Habit

- Woody shrub
- Fruits on **1 year-old wood**
- Shallow roots

Spacing

- Southern Highbush: **4-5 ft apart**
- Rabbiteye: **6-8 ft apart**

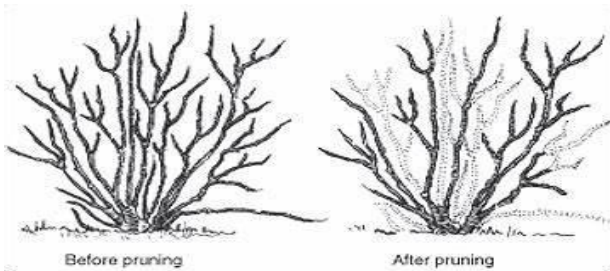
Rows: **8-10 ft**

Pruning Concept

- Maintain **5-8 canes of mixed age**
- Year 1 cane – young
- Year 2 cane – productive
- Year 3 cane – peak
- Year 4+ cane – remove

Each winter:

- Remove 1-2 oldest canes
- Open canopy for airflow
- ✓ Rotating cane age keeps berry size large
- ✓ Increase airflow to reduce disease and pest pressure



● BLACKBERRIES (Easy)

Growth Habit

- Perennial roots
- Biennial canes
- Year 1 = Primocane (vegetative)
- Year 2 = Floricane (fruiting)

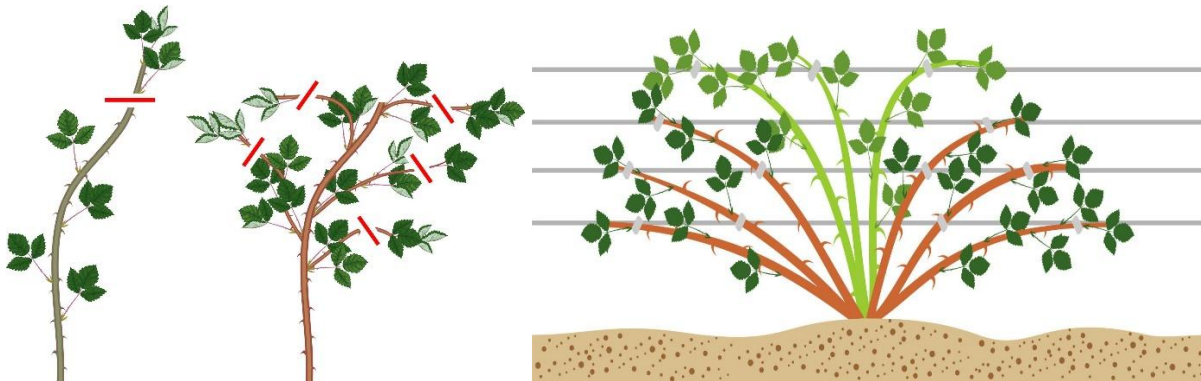
Spacing

- Plants: **3-4 ft apart**
- Rows: **8-10 ft**

Pruning

After harvest:

- Remove all **floricanes**
 - Train new **primocanes**
 - Tip primocanes around **3-4 ft** to encourage branching.
- ✓ Roots live indefinitely
- ✓ Canes are temporary



🍓 RASPBERRIES

Growth Habit

- Perennial roots
- Biennial canes

Spacing

- Plants: **2-3 ft apart**
- Rows: **8-10 ft**

Summer-Bearing

- Fruit on **second-year canes**
- Remove fruited canes after harvest.

Fall-Bearing (Primocane)

Option 1:

- Cut to ground each winter = One large fall crop

Option 2:

- Leave lower cane = Small summer crop + fall crop
- ✓ Thin yearly for airflow
- ✓ Narrow hedgerow = bigger berries

Soil Preparation for Berry Plantings

Proper soil preparation is one of the most important steps for successful berry production. Most berry crops prefer **loose, well-drained soil rich in organic matter**.

Before planting, loosen the soil **12–18 inches deep** and mix in **compost**. This improves drainage, supports soil biology, and helps roots establish quickly.

Avoid heavy fertilizing at planting. Young roots are sensitive, and excess fertilizer can cause weak growth. Instead, focus on improving soil structure and fertility with compost and mulch.

After planting, apply **2–4 inches of mulch** such as wood chips, bark, or straw. Mulch helps regulate soil temperature, retain moisture, and gradually build healthy soil. Consistently add compost to mulch layer to prov

Soil pH Considerations

Different berry crops prefer slightly different soil conditions:

- **Blueberries:** strongly acidic soil (pH 4.5–5.5)
- **Blackberries & raspberries:** slightly acidic soil (pH 5.5–6.5)
- **Grapes & kiwis:** mildly acidic to neutral (pH 6.0–7.0)

If soil is heavy clay or poorly drained, consider **raised beds or mounded rows** to improve drainage and root health.

Healthy soil supports strong root systems, which leads to better cane growth, improved fruit production, and longer plant lifespan.

Sunlight Requirements

All berry crops and vines perform best in **full sun**.

Minimum sunlight for good fruit production is **6–8 hours per day**.

Too much shade can cause:

- weak growth
- fewer flowers
- smaller fruit
- poor sugar development

Good sunlight exposure also improves **fruit color, flavor, and disease resistance**.

Watering Tips

Most berry crops have relatively shallow root systems and benefit from **consistent soil moisture**, especially during fruit development.

General watering guidelines:

- Water deeply but infrequently to encourage deeper roots
- Avoid constantly wet soil, which can lead to root disease
- Mulch helps maintain even soil moisture

Blueberries and raspberries are particularly sensitive to **dry soil during fruit development**, which can cause smaller berries.

Pollination Notes

Most berry crops benefit from having more than one variety.

Blueberries produce better crops when planted with another variety for cross-pollination.

Kiwis require both male and female plants for fruit production.

A typical planting ratio is **1 male plant for every 6–8 female plants**.

Grapes, raspberries, and blackberries are generally **self-fertile**.