

Time to Plant Garlic and Transplant Raspberries and Blackberries

For garlic lovers, September's cooler weather is a welcome reminder that it's time for a new crop. Long considered a deterrent to the common cold, garlic is a favorite herb in Mexican and Italian cuisine. California Early is a popular and well-adapted garlic variety for the foothills.

Unlike multilayered onion bulbs, segmented garlic bulbs are made of fleshy cloves. Plant individual cloves in well-fertilized soil with the basal ends down and the pointed tips up, about 1 to 3 inches deep and 3 to 6 inches apart. Keep rows 3 feet apart.

Garlic cloves will swell in the fall as they develop roots, then go dormant in the winter. Growth will resume in the warmer days of spring with the emergence of flat, keel or V-shaped leaves. Apply nitrogen fertilizer in early spring to carry the plants until harvest in late June or July.

September is also time to plant fall-bearing red raspberries. Traditional red raspberry varieties produce berries in early summer on canes that emerged the previous year. Fall-bearing or everbearing red raspberries produce berries on the upper ends of canes that emerged in the spring. Fall-bearing raspberries are sweeter than summer berries because cool weather retards plant respiration, causing sugars to accumulate in the berries. Some popular fall-bearing varieties are Heritage, Autumn Bliss and Red Wing.

Early September is a good time to start a new red raspberry bed. If plants and root systems are healthy, the suckers or daughter plants that emerge around mature mother plants can be transplanted to new areas. Carefully sever the roots attached to the mother plant, maintaining a soil ball around the root system of the sucker. After transplanting, firm the soil over the top of the roots. Prune two-thirds off the cane's top to balance top growth with root growth and water immediately. Plant late in the evening to reduce stress on the transplant.

For thornless blackberries, avoid digging up canes because it can damage the root system and cause canes to become thorny again. To keep them thornless, in early September bury the tips of new canes in the soil next to the mother plant. Do not break canes when bending. Firm the soil over the tip to keep in place, then water. Dig up the rooted tip in the spring, sever it from the mother cane, and replant it in another location. Prune the transplanted cane to 2 to 3 buds, firm the soil over the roots, and water. Known as tip layering, this process can also be used on black raspberries.

This article adapted from Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA. Please contact Ken Churches at cdcalaveras@ucdavis.edu or (209) 754-6475 with your agricultural questions. To speak with a Certified Master Gardener: Calaveras (209) 754-2880, Tuolumne (209) 533-5696, Amador (209) 223-6837, El Dorado (530) 621-5543.

