



Aylett Nurseries
The Complete Garden Centre

Soft Fruit

Including Grapes

Information Leaflet No. 23



North Orbital Road (A414)
St. Albans
Hertfordshire
AL2 1DH
Tel: 01727 822255
Fax: 01727 823024
E-mail: info@aylettnurseries.co.uk
Web: www.aylettnurseries.co.uk



In most gardens there should be room to grow at least some Soft Fruits for use in the home. They occupy the minimum of space, and you have the pleasure of eating delicious health-giving fruit. Generally easy to grow; but best crops will be obtained when growing in fruit cages, as birds also enjoy the fruits. Our plant area staff are available to help with your selection.

BLACKBERRIES AND HYBRID BERRIES

Will grow on a wide range of soils, but hybrid berries grow better in well-drained soil with plenty of well-rotted manure added. Blackberries will grow in part shade, but best crops are obtained on a sunny site.

PLANTING

Minimum 2 to 4 metres apart, allow 2 metres between rows. Average yield for a well grown bush is 5 to 7 kg. Suitable for growing against a north facing wall.

TRAINING

Support on wire spaced every 30cm between 1 metre and 2 metres. There are several ways to train fruit i.e. fan, rope or weaving. Always train new canes separately from fruiting canes to reduce the risk of disease. After planting, cut cane down to 20cm to encourage young strong growth. In following years, cut out fruiting wood after harvesting and tie in new canes. Best fruits are produced on new wood.

BLACKBERRY VARIETIES

Adrienne - Bright, firm, long conical fruit. Ripens July. Vigorous, spine free canes. Dessert fruit. Height & spread 1.5m.

Apache - Large glossy berries, sweet juicy flavour. Crop mid-August. Erect thornless stems. Height 2m, spread 2.5m.

Bedford Giant - Large crop, round juicy berries in big clusters for easy picking. Excellent for freezing, bottling and jam making. Ripens July - August. First early variety. Height 2.2m, spread 4m.

Black Satin - Bright firm long conical fruit ripens July-August. Vigorous spine-free canes. Ultimate trained height 3-4m. Good variety for preserves.

Loch Ness - Good flavoured thornless variety. Heavy cropper. Ripens August.

Loch Maree - Thornless variety. Good flavour. Heavy cropper. Double pink flowers.

Navaho - Large clusters of sweet fruit in August. Upright thornless canes. Ht. & sp. 2.5m.

Natchez - Thornless variety. Large sweet fruit, ripens early June. Good cropper. Ht. 1.8m, sp. 1.5m.

Oregon Thornless - Large juicy fruit. Ripens mid-August - September. Best of all thornless types. Semi-evergreen.

HYBRID BERRIES

Loganberry Thornless - As above but smooth stems easier to handle. Canes can grow to 6m uncut.

Tayberry - Long large deep purple berries with a rich aromatic flavour. Fruit ripens early July. Crops heavily and regularly.

BLACKCURRANTS

Will grow on a wide range of soils, ideally this should be slightly acid and highly fertile. Light soils need plenty of organic material. Dig in well-rotted manure and bone meal at 3oz per square metre. Mulch with well-rotted manure annually. Most flower early and are susceptible to spring frosts in exposed sites. Cover at night if possible.

PLANTING

Planting distance 1.5 metres with 1.8 metres between rows. Average height 1.5 metres.

PRUNING

Prune hard when winter planting to 5 - 6 cm. Leave for one year. In subsequent years remove 1/3 of the bush, cut out badly placed or damaged wood. Cut back fruiting branch to strong bud. No wood should be retained which is greater than 4 years.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Gall Mite Big-Bud - Minute mites feed in buds which swell. Control - Hand pick and burn affected buds. Dig out and burn severely affected plants.

Leaf Spot - Produces small dark Brown spots on leaf surface until whole leaf turns Brown and prematurely falls. Control - Rake up and burn affected leaves.

Birds - Will peck at ripening fruit. Cover if possible or plant in a fruit cage.

BLACKCURRANT VARIETIES

Baldwin - Large berries good flavour high in Vitamin C. Good for preserving. Ripens August.

Ben Alder - High quality flavoured fruit. Ripens early August. Late flowering and frost resistant.

Ben Connan - Large berries ripen August. Good flavour. Resistant to frost and mildew.

Ben Hope - High quality flavoured fruit. Ripens in August. Resistant to big-bud.

Ben Lomond - Large good flavoured fruit. Heavy cropping. Resistant to frost and mildew. Compact bushes. Ripens August.

Ben Sarek - Compact heavy cropping bush. Produces large fruits. Highly recommended garden variety.

Ben Tirran - Very heavy cropper, ripens August - September. Good frost and disease resistance.

RED AND WHITE CURRANTS

Will grow in the same conditions as blackcurrants but flowers are hardier, so a useful plant for north facing walls and shaded areas, providing the soil is not dry and overhanging trees do not drip onto the plant.

PLANTING

Space bushes 1.5 metres apart. Height 1.5 metres.

PRUNING

The object is to create a goblet shaped bush with about 8 to 10 main branches. They fruit on older wood, so cut back new season's laterals to 2.5 cm from the main stem.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Birds - Attack ripe fruit - protect with netting or a cage.

Leaf Spot - Causes small Brown spots on leaves which will fall prematurely. Control - collect and burn affected leaves.

REDCURRANT VARIETIES

Jonkheer Van Tets - Large fruit, firm and juicy with good flavour. Heavy crop ripening June – July.

Laxtons No.1 - Medium - large berries good flavour. Ripens July. Heavy cropper makes a compact bush.

Rosetta - Long trusses of pale pink fruits with good acid flavour. Pick late July/August.

Rovada - Large, well flavoured and juicy fruit. Heavy crop ripening July – August.

WHITECURRANT

White Versailles - Large pale-yellow berries. Sweet and firm. Ripens July. Prolific cropper. Good for eating raw.

GOJI BERRY

Goji Berry - Newer super fruit with orange-red berries. Large wide spreading shrub. Height and spread 3m. Grow in well drained soil in full sun, best if trained against a wall.

GOOSEBERRIES

Gooseberries are hardy and will grow on a wide range of soils, but these must not be badly drained. They are useful for a north facing wall or fence and will grow in partial shade.

PLANTING

Plant at 1.5 apart - 1.5 metres between rows. Height 1.5 metres. Average crop 2.5 kilos.

PRUNING

Fruit is borne on older spurs and needs a permanent framework of branches to form an open centred bush. Shorten side growth to three or four buds. On established bushes prune out any old or dead wood, trim new growth by one third.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Bullfinches - Eat buds in winter, if troubled, net bushes from November to April.

Gooseberry Sawfly - Caterpillars feed on leaves and soon de-foliate the bush if the infestation is heavy. Check for first signs of attack from May onwards. Hand pick and destroy caterpillars if possible.

Mildew - (American Gooseberry Mildew) - Affects leaves, shoots and fruit, producing a White powdery deposit. Diseased shoots should be cut out and burnt.

GOOSEBERRY VARIETIES

Captivator - Red fruits with good flavour. Ripens July. Mildew resistant. Almost thornless.

Careless - Large lime green fruit. Ripens Mid July. Heavy cropper. Cooks and freezes well.

Hinnomaki Green - Medium to large fruit ripens July. Excellent sweet flavour.

Hinnomaki Red - Large red fruits ripens July. Mildew resistant.

Hinnomaki Yellow - Very large yellow fruits. Ripens mid-July. Exceptional flavour. Good Mildew resistance.

Invicata - Good flavour. Green fruit ripens June - mid October. Heavy cropper resistant to Mildew. Ideal for jam and bottling.

HONEYBERRY

Honeyberry - New fruit with ripe blue berries. Tastes similar to blueberry. Edible member of the honeysuckle family. Most soils, full sun, height and spread 1.2m. Best planted in twos.

RASPBERRIES

Grow best on good soil that is moisture retentive but well drained. Add plenty of well-rotted manure when planting. Plant canes 40 - 45cm apart 1.8 metres between rows. Needs supporting wires on stout posts up to 1.5 metres. Canes will grow up to 2 metres. Cut canes down to 20 - 30 cm after planting. It is best if you do not allow plants to fruit in first season. In following years - cut out all old fruiting wood to ground level after picking is over. Mulch plants in spring and add general purpose fertiliser. Autumn fruiting varieties - these are pruned to a few centimetres off the ground in February. Newly planted canes are pruned as other varieties.

**ALL VARIETIES ARE AVAILABLE BARE ROOTED FROM NOVEMBER TO MARCH ONLY
AND ARE FROM VIRUS-FREE STOCK.
IN SUMMERTIME, SINGLE POT GROWN PLANTS ARE AVAILABLE.**

PESTS AND DISEASES

Raspberry Beetles - Small grubs on fruit

Virus - Causes yellow mottling of leaves which become distorted, canes lose vigour and reduce their cropping capacity. Affected canes should be removed and burned. Soil should be changed or plant moved to new site. Our stock is virus free.

Iron Deficiency - Shows as irregular yellowing between veins. Do not confuse with virus. Treat with sequestered iron.

Spur Blight / Cane Spot - Fungus diseases cause dark purple blotches around buds and shoot withering in early spring.

RASPBERRY VARIETIES

Allgold - Large yellow berries, sweet and juicy, September – October. Height 1.5m.

Autumn Bliss - Large red berries ripen August - October. Delicious flavour. Easy to pick. Hard prune in spring.

Cascade Delight - Large glossy fruit, excellent flavour. Ripens August. Height 1.5m

Erika - Large delicious fruits from summer to autumn. High yields.

Glen Ample - Large fleshy high quality soft fruit. Good flavour. Good cropper. Spine-free. Ripens June to July.

Glen Clova - Medium sized firm red fruit ripens June - July. Good for freezing. Heavy cropper. Early variety.

Glen Doll - Fleshy high-quality fruit July/August. Good flavour and cropper – spine free.

Glen Lyon - Medium sized berries suitable for eating or cooking ripen June - July. Good flavour. Good cropper. Good for jam.

Glen Magna - Soft fruit with a good flavour. Excellent quality for eating or cooking. High yielding. Ripens in August.

Glen Prosen - Large red fruit July - August. Good flavour and easy to pick. Spineless stems.

Heritage - Excellent flavoured fruits August - October. Sturdy, upright vigorous canes. Hard prune in spring.

Malling Admiral - Firm bright red berries ripen mid-July. Good flavour. Resistance to aphids.

Malling Jewel - Sweet firm red berries good flavour. Heavy consistent cropper. Frost hardy. Mid-season variety.

Octavia - Large dark red fruit. New late season variety. Excellent flavour and appearance.

Tadmor - Late Summer to Autumn fruiting red berries. Good flavour. Require little support.

Tulameen - Excellent quality for eating or cooking, with a good flavour. Ripens August. High yielding.

RHUBARB

Will thrive in any good deep soil and benefits from well-rotted manure when planting and as mulch.

PLANTING

Plant at 90cms apart. Do not pick in first year of planting. When picking, do not take the complete stem. Rhubarb should be pulled and not cut. Early crops can be achieved by forcing i.e. lift some crowns and place these in compost in pots or boxes in a cool greenhouse or by covering some crowns outside with rhubarb forcing pots or upturned boxes/bins. Do not use the same clumps for forcing every year. Lift established clumps every 3 - 4 years and thin to smaller crowns as needed. Cut out any flowering spikes.

RHUBARB VARIETIES

Champagne - Large deep crimson edible stalks good flavour. Ripens April - May. Good for preserving.

Delight - Excellent quality red stems, sweet fruity flavour.

Raspberry Red - Excellent quality bright red stems. Sweet flavour. Not stringy.

Red Champagne - Red leafstalks. Sweet flavour. Reliable and early. Suitable for forcing.

Timperley Early - Long sturdy red edible stalks good flavour. Ripens April - May. Forces well

Victoria - Excellent quality red stalks ripen late spring. Ideal for pies and jams.

STRAWBERRIES

Will grow on most well drained soils. Prepare bed before planting, adding well-rotted manure and digging in well. Top dress with Growmore.

PLANTING

Plant 30 to 45 cm apart. Best in sunny, sheltered position. Early crops can be forced with cloches, best results being obtained by replacing the bed every three to four years, replanting on a new site. Also suitable for growing in barrels and pots, planting in good potting compost, keeping well-watered and fed with liquid fertiliser in the growing season. Replace plant and compost after three years.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Virus - Can be troublesome, causing stunting and poor or no crop. Symptoms - yellow edges, mottling and crinkling. Dig up and burn infected plant. Replant virus free plants in new soil in a new site.

Grey Mould & Mildew – Can attack the fruit during wet humid weather.

STRAWBERRY VARIETIES

Alpine Strawberry - Long fruiting season version of the wild strawberry with larger fruit. Makes an attractive edging plant for flower beds or fruit plots having masses of small white flowers. Produces no runners replace every two or three years for best crops.

Cambridge Favourite - A mid-season variety suitable for freezing. Large salmon scarlet fruit ripens late June. Good flavour. Heavy and reliable cropper.

Delia - Bright orange-red fruit, good flavour. Mid-season variety.

Elsanta - Mid season variety. Firm berries, good flavour and shelf life. Medium to large glossy appearance.

Florence - Late season variety. Conical berries. Excellent flavour. Well displayed large fruit.

Fruitful Summer - Mid season variety. Good flavour and shelf live. Attractive medium to large glossy appearance.

Hapil - Mid season variety. Large orange red juicy fruits. Lush heavy cropping plant.

Honeoye - Brilliant red shiny fruit ripens June - July. Good flavoured heavy cropper.

Pegasus - Large to medium size bright glossy fruit with good flavour.

Red Gauntlet - Mid season variety. Erect habit displays berries well. Large sweet and juicy.

Rhapsody - Late season variety. Medium to large red flesh fruits. Firm with resistance to wilt and mildew.

Roman - Mid season. Pink flowered variety – good for baskets/containers. Vigorous.

Sonata - Early to mid-season. Abundant yields of uniform shape berries. Sweet and juicy.

Sweetheart - Mid to late season. Popular fruit which lasts well once picked. Good flavour.

Symphony – Firm berries with an excellent flavour. Strong bushy habit. Good disease resistance.

BLUEBERRIES

Requires moist but well drained, very acid soil, will require the generous addition of ericaceous compost or well-rotted leaf mould at planting. Best in a sunny site but will take light shade. Plant deeply to encourage bushes to sucker. Better crops can be obtained if planted in groups of different varieties.

PRUNING

Prune by cutting back longest stems by one third in the spring. On mature plants thin old and dense growth.

FEEDING & WATERING

In spring apply a dressing of ericaceous feed, mulch with plenty of ericaceous compost or leaf mould to a depth of 5 cm over a 90 cm diameter. Water freely in dry weather, if possible use rain water.

PICKING

Berries turn from red to blue-black when ripe, covered with familiar bloom. Generally free from disease but protect from birds.

BLUEBERRY VARIETIES

Bluecrop - Sweet and juicy fruit. Ripens Mid-August. Heavy cropper. Suitable for freezing.

Bluejay - Delicious blue fruits that ripen in July-August. Ultimate height 1.5m.

Darrow - Large blue berries of delicious flavour that ripen in July-August. An upright compact habit.

Earliblue - Large good flavoured fruit. Early July. Autumn colour. Sun/part shade. Height 1.5m.

Goldtraube - Large blue berries. Ripen late August. Delicious flavour. Sun or part shade.

Jersey - Firm sweet berries ripen August. Good autumn colour. Sun or part shade. Height 1.5m.

Northland - Profusion of blue berries August. Delicious flavour. Sun or part shade. Height 1.5m).

Patriot - Large dark blue berries with a good flavour, which ripen July-August. Compact habit. Height 1.5m. Suitable for containers.

CRANBERRIES

Grow in the same conditions as Blueberries but prefer a sunny site. No pruning is generally needed but shear off semi-erect stems in spring. They will require regular mulching of peat in spring.

Pilgrim - Large red berries, ripens in October/November Height 15cm.

GRAPES

GROWING A GRAPE VINE

Most grape vines are completely hardy, once established, but the fruit requires sunshine and warmth to ripen successfully. The black varieties mostly require greater warmth and a longer season to ripen than the white, which is why there are more white cultivars available for outside cultivation.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS

Drainage is the most important basic condition. Vines will not tolerate water logged conditions but they do require a rich diet. Prepare for planting as follows:

Take out a planting hole 90cm square and 60cm deep. Fork over the subsoil and incorporate about 25cm of brick rubble in the bottom of the hole. The planting mix should be alkaline (limey) and about half and half well-rotted compost and existing garden soil, adding about 3oz of balanced fertiliser e.g. Fish, Blood & Bone. Indoor varieties can be planted outside and led into the house through a hole. These can also be planted internally providing the roots are able to reach the subsoil under the foundations. All vines must be provided with adequate support.

SITUATION IF OUTDOORS

The planting site must be sheltered and receive the maximum possible sunlight. Best position, facing South-South East is better than South West. Train against a sunny wall, fence or wire support.

PRUNING

For comprehensive guidance on the pruning of vines we suggest that you visit the RHS website at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=284>

PESTS & DISEASES

Outdoor varieties are less prone to attacks by aphids than those grown under glass.

Powdery Mildew - Mealy bugs and Scale insects can be reduced by allowing frosts to enter the greenhouse in the dormant period from late November – late February. Good ventilation at all times can prevent fungal disease. Regular watering and feeding is essential.

GRAPE VARIETIES

Black Hamburg - Large black berries, ripens July to August. Needs cool glasshouse for best results. Excellent flavour for dessert. Mid-season variety.

Brandt - Small black berries. Ripens October. Good flavour for dessert. Late outdoor variety. With good autumn leaf colour.

Cabernet Sauvignon - Red fruit ripens late September. Most popular red wine variety.

Golden Chasselas - Excellent dessert, fine flavoured grape with golden translucent berries. Good early glasshouse variety.

Lakemont - Seedless variety for indoor or outdoor. Large yellow Muscat flavoured grapes. Needs good soil and a sunny position. Mildew resistant.

Muscat Bleu - Dessert grape. Large blue/black fruit in late summer. Good autumn colour. Ht. 1.2m, sp. 4m.

Polo Muscat - Dessert or wine. Slight muscat aroma with balanced sweet and acidity. Early ripening. Ht. 1.2m sp. 4m.

Phoenix - Dessert variety. Muscat-aroma grapes which turn yellow when ripe in October. Heavy yields. Train on wires/fence. On Phylloxera-resistant roots.

Regent - Dessert variety, sweet refreshing black fruits.

**This leaflet is available in
alternative formats.**

Please ask a member of staff or
Tel: 01727 822255
Email: info@aylettnurseries.co.uk

Last Reviewed January 2019