

# Raspberry Pruning

Tue, 7/20 11:59AM 11:46

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

canes, raspberry, joe, type, talk, crop, cut, grow, christa, pruning, fruiting, nubbins, ground, fruit, prune, disease, iowa state university, spring, brush hog, tool

## SPEAKERS

Speaker 3, Christa Hartsook, Joe Hannan

---

**C** Christa Hartsook 00:15

Hello, and welcome to the Small Farms Podcast, a production of the Small Farms Program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Our podcast covers the opportunities and challenges associated with rural life. In this episode I visit with Joe Hannan, Commercial Horticulture Specialist for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach on raspberry pruning. I'm Christa Hartsook, Small Farms Program Coordinator, and we hope you enjoy the show. Joe, welcome.

**J** Joe Hannan 00:42

Hey, Krista. Good to be here today in this cold weather and anxiously waiting for spring.

**C** Christa Hartsook 00:47

We are anxiously waiting. And we're going to talk about more of a spring function today. So as we kind of get through these cold temps, we know spring is going to come eventually. And then it's really time to start pruning on those fruit crops.

**J** Joe Hannan 01:00

Yeah, you know, by the time this gets posted, and people be listening to this, the temperatures should be vastly improved and actually appropriate for pruning raspberries. So this should turn out good.

**C** Christa Hartsook 01:11

That would be great. I would love to see better temperatures here. So as we're talking about this Joe, how you prune I know is very dependent on the type of raspberry you have. But I'm thinking some of our listeners out there might not even know what type of raspberry they have.

J Joe Hannan 01:27

Yeah, Christa, I think that's a good place to start. That's kind of the same question I start with when talking to people on on raspberry pruning. So we have two different types of raspberries, we have the floricanne fruiting type and the primocane fruiting type.

C Christa Hartsook 01:42

Alright, do you want to talk a little bit about those differences, Joe? Or do you want to talk about those as we kind of go through pruning each one?

J Joe Hannan 01:49

I think I'll talk about the differences as we go through pruning. And maybe let's start with the easiest one and then go to the, to the more difficult one.

C Christa Hartsook 01:57

That sounds great.

J Joe Hannan 01:58

So the primocane fruiting one is the easiest one to identify and the easiest one to prune.

C Christa Hartsook 02:04

Okay.

J Joe Hannan 02:04

So primocane fruiting raspberries, they send up a new cane from the crown to the ground, every single year. And that cane comes up out of the ground, so it does all its vegetative growth, and then it flowers and fruits all in one year. So you have just one year's growth on that cane to actually get a crop. Okay, and that fruit off that cane will start to mature like late July, August, and into September.

C Christa Hartsook 02:34

Okay.

J Joe Hannan 02:35

So that's how you identify the primocane type. Because everything grows in one year, it's really easy to

burn. All you have to go and do, you know, basically, as when this thing this podcast gets posted, is just go out and prune everything off at ground level. Just hack everything down and straight to the ground for the primocane types.

**C** Christa Hartsook 02:58

And we can't injure the plant at all by doing that, because it's going to send up that new shoot anyway.

**J** Joe Hannan 03:03

Exactly. What's out there and overwintered doesn't matter. It's irrelevant, we're going to just get rid of it and grow new canes for next year's crop. It makes it really easy to do.

**C** Christa Hartsook 03:16

Okay, awesome. So as we're thinking about that pruning process itself, Joe, is there a tool that you would recommend? You know, we're not gonna be out there with our kitchen scissors, hacking away at these canes, what do we need to use to do something like that?

**J** Joe Hannan 03:30

Well, if you're outdoors and out in the field, and you have like a brush hog type mower, and you can get in there on these primocane types, go ahead and just run the brush hog over them and set it so it's chopping things off three to four inches above ground. And that's all you got to do. I mean, it's really easy. If you don't have a brush dog or say you're in a high tunnel or something like that. You can go through with a loppers, and just use your loppers to cut them off at ground level or somebody even suggested that using a European sigh and going through and swiping and cutting things off.

**C** Christa Hartsook 03:59

Okay,

**J** Joe Hannan 04:00

European sigh a little bit different than the American sigh and gentleman I was talking to in Nebraska says he, he's able to go through and cut out all his back within a few minutes using it. Again, it's all upright and vertical. It's just the design of the tools a little different than the American type with allowing you to kind of cut that heavier brush.

**C** Christa Hartsook 04:19

Yep, yep, that makes sense.

J

Joe Hannan 04:21

Yeah, there's no right or wrong tool other than the kitchen scissors to go out there and do it.

C

Christa Hartsook 04:27

That sounds good. So then Joe, if we're talking about our other kind of main type of raspberry, how do those floricanes differ?

J

Joe Hannan 04:34

So the floricanes take two years on a cane to flower and fruit. So on a floricanes, you have the cane coming up out of the ground in one year. Then you have to overwinter that cane. So last year's canes that grew. We overwinter them and then this year, so 2021, those canes will flower and fruit. And so to deal with those, I kind of go through and do it like a two step process. So first, I go through and remove anything that flowered and fruited last year, and cut those canes off at ground level, because those canes are now dead. And we need to get those out of here that will no longer be productive. So we go through and get all the canes that flowered and fruited last year, cut them out, remove them, and then go back through. And anything that's remaining should be last year's growth, and that's what you want to keep. So now that you've identified what you're keeping, I go through with my loppers, this is one where you have to kind of go in and do it by hand. But I go into with my loppers and I cut everything off at approximately knee high. Now granted, I'm short and some people are tall. But when I take the loppers, and I'm standing up, right not bending over, I basically just take it and reach down with the loppers and as far down as I can reach, that's the height they're getting cut off at. So you're not bending over moving around much. So you lop them off right at again, roughly that knee high. And then if there are any lateral branches on that lower part of the cane that you left, coming from the ground up, cut those back to about three to four inch nubbins. They'll have a stick out of the ground that's 18 to 24 inches tall. And we'll have three to six little three to four inch long nubbins on there. And that is what's going to put off new canes for this year and give us our fruit this year.

C

Christa Hartsook 06:26

Okay, and that's really it, then basically,

J

Joe Hannan 06:30

Yeah, I mean, that's pretty much it. I like to go through with those floricanes and kind of thin things down to about two to four canes per square foot, just because you have to leave room for new canes to grow up for the following year's crop. So you need to kind of send things out a little bit, anything that's broken, dead, diseased, go ahead and get rid of that material, you just don't want that in there, it's not going to be productive. Try to maintain your rows that you know, one and a half to two foot wide bands. You don't want to thicken briar in there, you need it to be rows and actually get in there.

C

Christa Hartsook 07:06

So and then Joe, maybe that brings up a good point. At what point do we need to kind of start thinking

about establishing that trellising system or anything like that to kind of keep those canes up, right?

**J** Joe Hannan 07:18

You know, we really don't need to start putting the trellis system in until we start getting some pretty serious growth. When you're seeing 6-12 inches, that's when you probably should be thinking about doing it. And then you know, you know how it goes. We think about doing it in two or three weeks later, we get it done.

**C** Christa Hartsook 07:33

Exactly. Yep.

**J** Joe Hannan 07:34

Exactly. Yeah. I mean, once we start getting some vegetative growth out there, you know, and some of us have permanent trellises. So it's just a matter of kind of re-tucking things.

**C** Christa Hartsook 07:44

Sure.

**J** Joe Hannan 07:45

I don't have permanent trellis. So I just, I leave my T posts in the ground, and I just run new bale twine kind of on an as needed basis.

**C** Christa Hartsook 07:54

Okay, if that makes sense.

**J** Joe Hannan 07:57

Yeah, so that's pretty simple.

**C** Christa Hartsook 07:58

It's pretty simple. If we're looking at kind of some of those old canes, then Joe and what and what we have lopped off, what do we need to do with those?

**J** Joe Hannan 08:07

J Joe Hannan 08:07

I would prefer to get them out of the field or out of the high tunnel or wherever they're grown and burn them in order to kill any disease that may have been on there. Once you get burnt, if you get up to good temperatures, you should kill anything that's there. And then you know, you can do whatever you want with ash afterwards. But burning it is a good idea. Speaking of disease, if you have diseases in your planting and even if you don't, it's a good idea to clean and sanitize your lopper fairly regularly as you're going through, you know, even if you stop every 15 to 30 minutes to wipe it down, and then put a little sanitizer on it just to prevent diseases from spreading throughout the field.

C Christa Hartsook 08:49

Absolutely good reminder for everyone. And Joe, let's say we've got listeners who are out there and listening to this podcast, and they're thinking, you know, I'd really like to order some raspberry plants for this year, you know, and put some in, do you prefer, you know, one type over the other for those that are interested in ordering?

J Joe Hannan 09:09

You mean primocane versus floricanes?

C Christa Hartsook 09:11

Yeah!

J Joe Hannan 09:12

Yeah. So it kind of depends. If you're looking at it from a market standpoint, it depends on when do you want your product in market, you know, I grow day neutrals myself. And so that's a fall bearing crop. And so I want my raspberries ripe at the same time, so I want them ripe in the fall. But if you're looking at wanting raspberry throughout the entire season from late spring, early summer, through late fall, you know into September, then you probably want to plant a little bit of both. You can actually kind of finagle that a little bit. Say you put in all primocanes you can treat primocanes like a floricanes type and basically prune them just like you would have for a floricanes. And that primocanes will give you flowers and fruit that first year it grew, but then if you print it off and treat it like a floricanes, it will send up new canes next year and give you fruit in the spring and early summer as well. So you can use a primocane type as a floricanes and have a broad set of harvest. I guess to actually get to answering your question, I would tend to lean more towards primocanes, simply because I can treat them like a floricanes or a primocane, and if I have a cold, terrible winter where I it's minus 25 degrees, some random February day, and I have a bunch of injury, no worries, I can just prune them all back to the ground and still have a full crop.

C Christa Hartsook 10:36

Yep, that makes sense.

J Joe Hannan 10:38

J Joe Hannan 10:38

Yeah. So if you treat a primocane like a floricane, you're going to get the same total crop. You're just getting that same total crop spread out over a winter season.

C Christa Hartsook 10:47

Okay. Yeah. Other things that we should talk about today?

J Joe Hannan 10:55

Scouting for insects, as they're going through the season. Raspberries are very susceptible to spider mites if you're in a high tunnel, very susceptible to Japanese beetle and Spotted Wing drisophila, but that's nothing new here at this point, so.

C Christa Hartsook 11:10

Alright, that sounds good. Joe, I appreciate you being on today.

J Joe Hannan 11:13

Yeah, thanks for hosting me here today. It's good to see you again.

C Christa Hartsook 11:16

It's good to be talking about something that is related to spring.

J Joe Hannan 11:20

It is I'm very motivated now to go out and actually get mine done this weekend.

C Christa Hartsook 11:25

Alright, sounds good. Thanks, Joe.

J Joe Hannan 11:27

Take care Christa!

S Speaker 3 11:29

This program is brought to you by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This institution is an equal opportunity provider for the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquires, go to

[www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext).