

Horticultural Department

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Propagating of Small Fruits

Strawberries New plants of the strawberry are secured from runners or propagating shoots of the parent plant. A single plant will produce several runners and from three to five new plants on each runner. When a new bed is started the runner plants nearest the parent plants only, should be used, as they are more vigorous than plants taken from near the tip of the runner.

Raspberries—New plants of the blackcap raspberry are secured by covering the tips of shoots (young canes) with dirt during late summer. Roots will form on these covered tips which can be transplanted the following spring, as a new plant.

Loganberries are usually propagated by the same method.

Red raspberries do not propagate from tips of the canes, but send out suckers or underground stems from the roots. New roots are formed on these suckers, a cane or stalk is produced during the summer, and the young plant may be reset either late the same fall or the following spring. An old plant may often be induced

to form many new ones from its roots by cutting the roots with a spade or by plowing close to the crown of the plant.

Blackberries—Produce new plants from the roots like the red raspberry.

Currants and gooseberries—These plants are usually propagated either by mound layerage or by cuttings made from the young shoots. Mound layerage is perhaps the simplest of the two methods. Soil is mounded over the crown of each plant, covering the base of each young cane. As soon as the roots have formed the cane may be severed from the parent plant and the newly formed plant reset. Mounding is best done in the summer after the crop has been harvested.

When a great many new plants are desired, cuttings can be made from the newly formed wood. In favorable localities, cuttings can be made just after pruning, in early spring, and the clippings of the young wood set in trenches in the soil. A piece of wood about the length and diameter of a lead pencil makes a very convenient cutting for handling. Before planting, the soil should be thoroughly prepared to a depth of ten inches. Cuttings are easily set by opening a crack in the soil with a spade, inserting the cutting with buds pointing upward, replacing the spade a few inches from the cutting, and by pressing forward on the handle of the spade, force the soil firmly around the cutting. It is usually preferable to set cuttings of gooseberry and currants deep enough to allow about two buds below the surface of the soil and two above. This will generally insure rooting and a vigorous top.

In some localities where it is difficult to start hardwood cuttings directly in the field, they may be started in a cold frame and transferred to the field as soon as they are well calloused. When handling in this way the cuttings are tied in bunches, inverted in moist sand with buds pointing downward, and covered by an inch or two of sand. This may be done any time during the fall after the wood has become well ripened. The object of inverting the cuttings is to keep the buds dormant while heat is applied to the base or butt end of the cutting. A few weeks before planting time in the spring a layer of decomposing horse manure should be spread over the sand in which the cuttings are imbedded. This will heat the butt end of the cuttings and induce callousing and formation of root growth. Additional heat may be added by using a glass sash over the decomposing manure. Care should be taken to keep the sand moist around the cuttings at all times. As soon as the callous and swelling which usually precedes the root growth has started, the cuttings may be transferred to a carefully prepared nursery bed, and planted, just as cuttings set directly into the field.

After the first season's growth in the nursery row the plants should be transferred to their permanent place

and headed back severely to induce new shoots from the base of each cane and crown of the plant.

PRUNING CURRANTS AND GOOSE-BERRIES.

Currants and gooseberries should be trained and pruned to the bush form rather than to the tree form. On these plants the fruit buds are produced on the older wood. The number of crops the canes should be allowed to produce before renewing will depend a great deal on the vigor of the plant. Usually a cane will produce three to four crops before it is necessary to remove it. If a few new canes are allowed to mature each season, the old canes can be gradually removed as the new ones come into bearing. The number of canes to allow each plant will depend upon the soil and the distance of setting. Plants set five or six feet apart each way can usually support from four to six strong canes. Each year the new

growth should be headed back about half of its length. This will produce a short stout cane, strong fruit buds, and well developed fruit. In localities where the wood growth is extremely long, as it is in Western Washington, it is good practice to drive a stout stake near each currant bush, and when the fruits are about half grown, tie the canes to the stake with a strong cord. This will often save a heavily fruited cane from breaking.

THE FEIJOA IN CALIFORNIA.

I have recently had some correspondence relative to a trial of the feijoa, a semi-tropical fruit of which southern California predicts wonderful things, and hope that it can be grown in the Puget Sound region if it is as valuable as the Californians say it is. Following is an article taken from the Monrovia Daily News, of Monrovia, Cal.:

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