

# Raspberry Weed Management

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**A** combined approach using chemical controls, cultural practices, and selective hand weeding can be used to effectively manage weeds in raspberry. Herbicides provide good overall control of most weeds. The key to successful chemical control is a vigorous, healthy, stand of canes to crowd out competing weeds within rows. Between row control can be managed using a cover crop with herbicide banding to limit spreading, mulches, cultivation, or broad-spectrum herbicide application.

Chemical control is most effective in combination with the establishment of a vigorous stand of canes. In the establishment year, care must be taken to eliminate perennial weeds such as Canadian thistle and field bindweed with a broad-spectrum herbicide such as glyphosate (RoundUp) before planting because these weeds can spread from root pieces moved during cultivation. Once established in a planting, they are very difficult to control.

After planting, a preemergent herbicide such as napropamide (Devrinol) should be applied to eliminate germinating weed seeds. Be aware that tissue culture plugs and young canes can show increased sensitivity to many herbicides until they are well established and reduced rates may be needed. Shallow cultivation is also recommended in the establishment year to eliminate young weeds while allowing the new canes to develop. Deep cultivation is not recommended as it can damage the root systems and turn up new weed seed that would not be controlled by the preemergent herbicide. Turf can be seeded between rows late in the summer to crowd out weeds and can be managed successfully by banding with a grass herbicide along the rows as the planting matures. Mulches within the rows as well as in row centers can be used to keep weeds down but care should be taken to maintain soil fertility. Also, in less than optimally drained soils or when growing root rot susceptible varieties, mulches can retain excess moisture and exacerbate root rot problems. Bare ground can also be maintained between rows with shallow cultivation, mowing, and/or broad-spectrum herbicides, but erosion can be a problem. However, special care must be taken to avoid disturbing the raspberry roots with the cultivator, to avoid weed seed development through regular mowing, and to avoid spray drift onto the raspberries when maintaining alleyways.

In established plantings, much of the chemical control is done in the fall or in the spring before bud break. By late spring, chemical control is limited to sethoxydim (Poast) for grass control. Be aware that Poast has a 45 days-to-harvest period in raspberry and by late spring may not be suitable for early season varieties that can fruit in June such as Prelude, Killarney, and Reveille. Spot treatments of

glyphosate with a wick applicator can be used to treat problem weeds making sure to avoid contact with the raspberries. This herbicide will translocate and kill not only the cane touched but also ones connected by the roots and can be spread not only by the applicator but by treated weeds blowing into the canes while still wet. A well thought out herbicide program combined with timely mowing and selective hand weeding is an effective integrated approach to weed control in raspberry and can be used to successfully manage weed pests for maximum yields and profits.

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