

Raspberry Dieback & Root Rot (*Phytophthora*)

Root Rot (*Phytophthora*) is one of the most destructive soil-bourne diseases that can affect young raspberry canes, normally causing them to die back during the first year of growth, or early in the second year. The disease is also associated with poorly drained and heavy soils that are liable to waterlogging.

Worse during wet years the first signs of its presence are that the fruit buds fail to grow out, or the



fruiting laterals wilt and die at any time between bud burst and berry ripening. All parts of the plant below or at ground level can be infected by this fungus and few, if any, new canes grow and any that do, wilt or show early autumn colouring and prematurely drop their leaves.

As the disease can be carried on planting canes, only Ministry certified canes should be purchased and planted. Improve drainage before planting raspberry canes by double digging all soils two spades deep. In addition, on the heavier soils, they should be planted on a raised bed or ridge. A bed may be formed by digging trenches 45cm (18in) wide, 60cm (2ft) from the intended raspberry row and spreading the soil over the bed. Alternatively, a planting ridge may be formed by digging the soil towards a centre line on which the canes are to be planted.

It is always advisable when planting new raspberry canes to plant in a bed that has not previously had raspberries growing. The varieties Malling Admiral, Autumn Bliss and Polka show good resistance to Root Rot.