

# Nourse Farms, Inc.

*Are you ready for your plants?*

## Four Important Steps

### 1. Choosing a site

When putting in a garden, wind protection, sunlight, drainage, and existing landscaping are all important considerations. As a general rule berries require full sun for ripening. Soil must have good drainage but should also be able to hold some moisture.

#### Extra tips

- Trellising will aid in the ripening and harvesting of raspberries.
- Blackberries can also be staked using the hill-method.
- Blueberry plants can be netted to keep the birds from eating the fruit.

### 2. Choosing a planting date

*If soil temperatures are above 50 degrees (50°F), it's okay to plant.* Soil temperatures warm *much* slower than air temperatures! Our dormant plants are never well suited for summer planting, and most will tolerate some light frost after planting.

*Every year is different, so please pay attention to the **ship week** noted on your order confirmation.*

**If you are not going to be able to plant within days of delivery, please change your delivery date.**

*If the weather is not cooperating, please **give at least five days notice** and we will be happy to change to your shipping date.*

### 3. Getting the ground ready

- As soon as your soil is dry enough to work, it is a good idea to rake the area free of winter debris and turn the soil. If the soil has never been gardened, early and thorough sod removal is necessary.
- Some prior plantings can leave behind viruses or pests that can harm your new plants. If you have used the soil in recent years for strawberries, raspberries, peppers or tomatoes, it is better to plant in a new area.
- You can do a pre-planting fertilization, either with common 10-10-10 type of commercial fertilizer or an organic method, but only use a little bit **well before planting** (at least 2-3 weeks) or wait until the plants are established. *Over fertilizing can lead to weak or "burnt" plants, so more is not always better!* The advantage of packaged fertilizers is that they are of consistent strength and come with guidelines printed on the label.

### 4. Your soil pH

- Learning your exact soil pH and making necessary adjustment before planting is the most important step! Testing and adjusting your pH to optimum levels is the easiest way to get ready for spring.
- Because most soil pH starts too high for blueberries, a dose of garden sulfur is usually required.
- A planting in the wrong pH will fail to thrive. Keep in mind, any addition of organic material will change the soil pH, especially wood chips, sawdust, leaves or yard clippings.

#### Ideal pH levels:

- raspberry, strawberry, and blackberries: **6.5-6.8**
- rhubarb: **6.0-6.8**
- horseradish: **6.2-6.7**
- currants and gooseberries: **6.0-6.5**
- asparagus: **7.0-7.2**
- blueberries: **4.5-4.8**

*If you have any questions please call the Nourse Farms office, Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm.*

*(413) 665-2658*

*More cultural information is available 24 hours a day on our website:*

**[www.noursefarms.com](http://www.noursefarms.com)**