

Weed Management in Organic Cane Berry Production. Dan O. Chellemi,
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Manual weeding costs can exceed \$3,000 per acre during first production year of organic raspberry and blackberry in California. Effective weed management programs will provide considerable savings in weed removal costs. In addition, effective weed management programs can improve fruit yield and quality while simultaneously reducing harvest costs. Weed management for cane berries can be broken down into three different areas; row middles, bed tops, and post rows. Each area relies upon different strategies for long-term weed management. Weed management in row middles can be accomplished through mechanical tillage, organic herbicides or mulches. For mechanical tillage, caution should be exercised to avoid damaging feeder roots extending down into the row middles. Thus, shallow tillage implements are suggested. Organic herbicides can be divided into two main groups; essential oils and acids. When using an organic herbicide for the first time, it is suggested to apply the material to a small area first to evaluate efficacy and potential phytotoxicity due to drift. Mulches for row middles include living mulches, plastic mulches, or weed mats. Weed management for bed tops requires an integrated approach that incorporates raised-plastic mulched beds, organic amendments and transplant material consisting of plug plants. Both frozen and green plug plants can be transplanted into holes pre-cut into the plastic mulch, similar to transplanting practices used in vegetable production systems. Weed management in post rows can use living or plastic mulches. Grass mixtures are preferred for living mulches due to their lower water requirements, ease of management and reductions in storm water run-off during the winter rainy season.