

Blackberries

DID YOU KNOW
CULTIVATION
OF BLACKBERRIES
FIRST BEGAN IN
1838?

CAN I GROW BLACKBERRIES?

Depending on the variety you choose, blackberries can grow in zones 3-10. It is important when choosing a variety to note whether it is a trailing variety or an erect variety. While the erect vines will be fine to grow anywhere, it is always a good idea to have a fence line or trellis available for the trailing varieties to climb along as they grow. Blackberry bushes come in both thornless and thorny varieties. The quality of the fruit is not affected by whether or not you have a thornless or thorny variety. Blackberry plants are self-pollinating.

HOW TO GROW BLACKBERRIES

Blackberry plants grow best in rich, well-draining soil. A mix that is slightly acidic with a pH of about 4.5-7.5 is ideal. It is a good idea to amend the soil with some compost when planting and to add an inch or two of compost once or twice a year thereafter. Plant about 4 feet apart and in a spot with full sun 6 to 8 hours daily. Plant in early spring, after there is no chance of the ground freezing. Keep the soil moist throughout the growing season without overwatering. Mulch the spot around your plant to help it retain water. However, keep the mulch away from the base of the plant itself to prevent root rot and disease.



MAINTENANCE AND CARE

Most blackberry varieties bear fruit once on 2-year-old canes called floricanes. The canes then die and must be removed. New canes, called primocanes, take their place.

To ensure optimal production, in the spring when new canes reach 3 to 4 feet in height, pinch off their tips. This action fosters the development of lateral branches, expanding the area available for a more abundant harvest. When lateral branches begin to get too long, you can also cut them back 15 to 18 inches.

In the fall or winter, when plants are dormant, remove the spent 2-year-old canes that will no longer produce fruit, and any diseased, damaged, or overly dense new canes. Retain about four to six of the new, robust canes for each bush. These first-year canes that popped up over the summer will produce next year's berries. Additionally, trim any side shoots down to a manageable 15 inches.

If you have EVERBEARING berries, sometimes called “primocane-bearing,” these varieties will fruit toward the top of the canes in the fall and then bear again the following spring farther down the canes.

COMMON VARIETIES GROWN IN THE SOUTH

Thornless varieties

Apache - Requires 800 chill hours

Arapaho - Requires 500 chill hours

Black Satin - Requires 450 chill hours

Caddo - Requires 300 chill hours

Hull - Requires 450 chill hours

Navaho - Requires 800 chill hours

Natchez - Requires 500 chill hours

Ouachita - Requires 300 chill hours

Osage - Requires 400 chill hours

Prime-Ark Freedom (Everbearing) - Requires 300 chill hours

Prime-Ark Traveler (Everbearing) - Requires 300 chill hours

Sweet-Ark Ponca - Requires 300 chill hours

Triple Crown - Requires 450 chill hours

Thorny varieties

Brazos - Requires 500 chill hours

Chickasaw - Requires 600 chill hours

Choctaw - Requires 400 chill hours

Kiowa - Requires 600 chill hours

Prime-Ark 45 - Requires 300 chill hours

Rosborough - Requires 300 chill hours

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