



2450 S. Curry Street, Carson City, NV Tel: 775-882-8600 Fax: 775-882-7285

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## **All About Blackberries**

### **Planting, Fertilization & Watering**

Blackberries will thrive in most soil types including sandy or clay types, however, good drainage is essential. Amend the soil with plenty of Black Forest Compost or Master Nursery Fir Mulch and moderate amounts of well composted manures including Master Nursery Paydirt (45% chicken manure), if desired. Be careful not to add excessive steer manure, which contains salts not leached out during composting. These salts will contribute to the already alkaline soil of some areas.

Blackberries respond extremely well to a well-balanced fertilizer applied at blossom time, and successively throughout the growing season. Granules easily broadcast include Master Nursery Fruit Tree & Vine Food and Best All Purpose 16-16-16. These products are formulated for time-release fertilization. Application of 3 to 4 times a year is usually sufficient. If a more water soluble fertilizer is desired, Master Nursery Master Gro works well if applied often enough, usually every two weeks from late April through early August. Master Nursery Master Start, a granular fertilizer may also be used.

Young trailing blackberries will appreciate regular deep watering. Drip irrigation works well, as do soaker hoses. Fruiting plants in general do not like to completely dry out between waterings, as diminished fruit production may occur. Nor will your trailing blackberries appreciate overly moist soil. Immature plants should be watered twice monthly during winter months; mature plants require once monthly watering during winter months.

Blackberry plants will thrive in full sun; however, for the best fruit production, afternoon shade is preferred. With afternoon shade, thinner skinned, more succulent berries develop because moisture does not evaporate through the berry.

Although blackberries do not require a bark mulch, mulching helps keep the ground surrounding the plant cooler and aids in moisture retention. Any bark product—shredded, small, medium, large, or walk-on—will suffice.

Thornless forms of all blackberries should not be deeply cultivated around as damaged feeder roots will send up an occasional sticky sucker that requires removal.

## **Pruning & Training**

Blackberries bear fruit on the 2-year old canes—be careful when pruning. In the early spring when the new canes begin to grow, consider training this new growth with care not to harm it. Training is most efficient when the canes are young and subtle. The simplest method of training is a stake with a cross arm about 5' high. Canes should be carefully brought up and held in place with 2 or 3 ties of green tie tape (less injurious to the young canes than twine). Wire trellis works well also. The only 'right' way to train blackberries is so that harvest and care is easiest for you. After harvest, the 2-year old fruiting canes may be pruned as close to the ground as possible without injuring the new canes.

Due to the uncertainty of wholesale grower stock, trucking, and weather, all varieties will not be available at all times. Although we do have the ability to special order some stock, we make no guarantee of its arrival and cheerfully encourage alternate selections.

## **Available Varieties**

Apache (Thornless): Very large fruit, vigorous erect canes with good yields & fruit quality. Ripens Mid-season.

Black Satin (Thornless): Medium to large black berry. Honey sweet flavor excellent for jams, jellies, fresh eating and pastries. Plant produces semi-erect thornless vines highly disease resistant. Ripens July.

Boysenberry (Thornless): Medium, almost seedless, sweet, juicy berry which is good for fresh eating, freezing, jams, preserves, pastries, syrup and wine. Ripens May/June.

Boysenberry: Large, non-shiny reddish-black berry. Soft, very juicy, sweet-tart tasting berry. Delightful aroma. Good for canning, freezing, and eating fresh. Ripens June.

Cherokee; Large, firm, attractive fruit with excellent flavor. Vigorous, erect canes. Ripens Mid-season.

Chester (Thornless): Large fruit, sweet, high quality and firm. Semi-upright. Ripens late season.

Dirksen (Thornless): Large, black fruit. Excellent quality and flavor, high sugar content. Similar to Black Satin. Ripens July.

Loganberry (Thornless): Medium-large. Soft, tart or sour fruit because of high acidity. Excellent for pies, juice, canning, and wine making. Ripens June.

Marionberry: Medium to large fruit—bright red, firm, very flavorful. Vigorous, thorny canes. Recommended for fresh eating, jams, preserves, and deserts. Ripens July/August

Navaho (Thornless): Medium. Superior fruit quality with less tart flavor than other varieties. Fully erect, self supporting shrub. Ripens June/July.

Nectarberry: Large, non-shiny reddish-black berry. Soft, very juicy, sweet-tart flavor. Delightful aroma. Good for canning, freezing, and eating fresh. Ripens June.

Olallie: Large, shiny black, firm berry. Sweeter and less tart than others. Vigorous grower, very productive. Ripens late May to early July.

Tayberry: Large, long conical berries with reddish purple color and excellent, slightly aromatic flavor. < Excellent quality for freezing, canning, jams and jellies. Ripens July/August.

Thornless Hull: Very large fruit is firm, sweet, very flavorful and has a good keeping quality. Plants are semi-erect and vigorous Good disease resistance. Ripens July.

Youngberry: Large dark red berry. Similar to Boysenberry, but is shiny and milder and less acidic. Good for fresh eating, canning and freezing. Ripens June.