

Blackberries will grow in almost any type of soil. They do require a steady moisture supply, especially in light or sandy soils. They do not require a high fertility level. In most garden soils little or no fertilizer is necessary to maintain vigorous growth. If fertilizer is needed, apply a flower or vegetable fertilizer around bloom time. Keep your blackberry planting clean to eliminate weed competition and sucker growth. However, do not cultivate deeply around thornless varieties; if the feeder roots are damaged, they will send up thorny suckers that will need to be pruned out.

The crowns of blackberry plants are perennial: new canes arise from them every year. The canes themselves are usually biennial; each one lives for two years. During the first year, they grow and send out laterals (side branches). The second year, small branches grow from buds on the one-year-old canes. Fruit is borne on these side branches. After fruiting, the entire cane dies, and new canes sprout next year from the root. All of the blackberries that Sky carries are fully hardy in the Puget Sound region.

Trailing varieties should be planted 8 to 12 feet apart. They do best trained to a 2-wire trellis, one wire 5 feet above the ground, the lower one about 3 feet above the ground. Prune blackberries in late summer after they have fruited. Completely remove the old canes that have fruited. Thin the new canes, leaving 6 to 12 of the sturdiest to bear next season's fruit. **DO NOT PRUNE THE TIPS OF THE CANES ON TRAILING VARIETIES.** The exception to these rules is the new variety Prime Ark®45, which is cut to the ground every fall after the leaves die.

### **REGULAR BLACKBERRY VARIETIES (HAVE THORNS)**

**BOYSENBERRY:** Very large, non shiny, dark maroon berries. Soft, very juicy flesh. Distinctive rich tangy flavor and very aromatic. Excellent for fresh eating, freezing, jams, pastries, juice, syrup, and wine. Ripens in July. Hardy to -10° F. Vigorous trailing vines.

**MARIONBERRY:** Large, bright-black, with excellent flavor. Recommended for fresh eating, jams, preserves, and desserts. Vigorous thorny plant, strong trailing canes, and thrifty cane production. Ripens in July and early August.

**PRIME ARK ®45:** Large, sweet berries with classic blackberry flavor. This variety is the first “primocane” variety, meaning it produces exclusively on new growth. Pruning is super-easy—just cut the canes to the ground every fall after the leaves die! No mess, no sprawling tangle, no thought!

**THORNLESS BERRY VARIETIES**

**BLACK SATIN:** Large, firm, glossy black fruit. Excellent sweet flavor, good for fresh eating and in jams. Excellent in Pacific Northwest; heavy yields. Ripens in July. Very cold hardy.

**Thornless BOYSENBERRY:** Very large, non shiny, dark maroon berries. Soft, very juicy flesh. Distinctive rich tangy flavor and very aromatic. Excellent for fresh eating, freezing, jams, pastries, juice, syrup, and wine. Ripens in July. Hardy to -10° F. Vigorous trailing vines.

**CHESTER:** Large sweet high quality berries. Great for fresh eating. Heat tolerant. Ripens mid August to mid September.

**LOGANBERRY:** Large fruit with a unique flavor. Thought to be a wild cross between a blackberry and a red raspberry. Ripens in August and September. Trailing habit.

**TRIPLE CROWN:** Very large, sweet, shiny berry. Great fresh or in jelly, toppings, or juice. Begins ripening in early August, can continue until frost. Very hardy and vigorous. Semi-erect canes. Very high yields—as much as 30 pounds per established plant. Ripens late July.

**THORNLESS PATIO VARIETY (BRAZELBERRY)**

**BABY CAKES:** This thornless variety has been bred to be perfect in containers or small areas. The canes are upright, requiring no support, and grow only 3-4' tall. The berries are large and sweet with true blackberry favor. In our region, Baby Cakes will ripen a crop in summer and often a second crop in the fall.