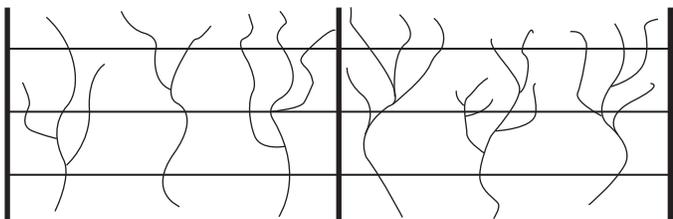


Growing raspberries, blackberries and boysenberries

The Brambleberries

Ripe berries are one the most prized of fruits in the summer, glorious raspberries, blackberries and boysenberries. The aroma and taste of fresh blackberries and raspberries warmed by the sun is unforgettable. Most home gardeners are daunted by the prospect of growing their own tasty berries. Images of out of control blackberries and thorns come to mind. But started right and with training, the wild beast can be tamed.

It is probably best to train your berries on wires, very much like grapes are grown. Choose a site that is in full sun. In areas where the summers are hotter or inland choose a part sun area that is protected from hot afternoon sun. A fence line is perfect. The soil should be well draining and rich in compost. Sloat Loam Builder is a good product to use if you don't make your own compost. An application of gypsum will increase the acidity as berries like it at a pH of around 5.0. Set 6' stakes (about a foot deep) 4 feet apart. Run 2 or 3 lengths of landscape wire between them. Your project should look something like this:



The berry canes can then be trained along the wires.

Most berries fruit on biennial canes or 2-year wood. When you first purchase your plants, the canes you see will fruit that summer. New growth that sprouts from the base of these canes will be your fruiting wood the following summer. Be careful not to plant the canes too deeply. You do not want to bury any greenish white buds at the base. This is the new growth. Once the berries are picked in the summer, cut the fruiting canes to the ground. Tie up the new canes that formed that season onto the wires. In spring, tip-prune the canes to promote branching. There is one exception to this rule, the everbearing raspberry Heritage.

The Heritage raspberry bears in the fall and again in spring. After the fall harvest, remove the tops of the canes that bore the fruit. The lower part of the canes will sprout lateral shoots that will fruit in spring. Cut the cane completely back after this last fruit set.

Keep berries evenly moist. Do not let the soil dry out. This love of moisture explains why we see so many blackberries along streambeds. Do not overfeed them. Too much fertilizer will give you a lot of leaf at the expense of flowers. Fertilize the berries in the spring with a top dressing of manure or Loam Builder. Mulch the canes in the fall with Forest Mulch Plus.



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