



Blackberry Growing Information

Cultural Requirements

Blackberries will thrive in most soil types, but good drainage is desirable with most varieties. Adding compost or worm castings to your soil at planting time and then each following year will improve the overall quality of the soil and allow the blackberries to thrive. Planting in an area with full sun will produce the best results.

Fertilization

Blackberries respond extremely well to balanced commercial blends of fertilizer such as Down To Earth Vegetable Garden (4-4-4) or Espoma Berry Tone (4-3-4). Apply at blossoming time.

Planting instructions

Plant the transplants at about the same depth the plant grew at the nursery. Adding some compost or worm castings to the topsoil that's used to fill the hole when planting will ensure the soil at the root zone is well-fed and ready to deliver nutrients to your plant! Plant blackberries at least three feet apart from one another to allow for the mature spread of each plant.

Pruning and training

As the new canes begin growing along the ground in the spring, they may be moved in alongside the row from time to time to keep them out of harm's way until they are ready to be trained. These canes will not bear fruit until the following summer when they are two years old. The ideal time to spring train is before the leaf buds begin expanding.

Several systems are used in training trailing blackberries. The simplest for the home gardener is a stake with a cross arm about five feet high. Canes should be brought up either directly from the ground or spiraled around the stake and held in place with two or three ties of strong twine. Twine may not be necessary if canes are looped over the cross arm and the ends twined into the canes below.

In the spring, you will want to perform "tip-pruning" on your blackberry canes. You'll want to prune the canes to two to three feet in height. This encourages strong lateral branches to grow more vigorously and ultimately give you more fruit. If the canes are shorter than 2-3 feet, just cut off a couple of inches to promote branching. Make sure to also prune any dead or diseased canes while you're at it.

Blackberries are produced on two-year-old canes. After harvest in the summer, the two-year-old fruiting canes will not produce again and should be removed as close to the ground as possible to promote the plant to produce more canes in the future.