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SAMLL FRUITS

BRAMBLES

Raspberries and Blackberries

Nothing beats a handful of fresh-picked blackberries on top of a bowl of ice cream on a sultry August eve. They are an excellent addition to the edible garden when properly managed and harvested promptly. Also, if properly supported, a trellis of brambles is a surprisingly attractive part of the garden.

Most brambles start producing fruit the second year in the garden. They are perennial plants with biennial cane and fruit production. *Primocanes* are first year canes that will produce fruit next year. Floricanes will produce flowers and fruit this year. They may be tangled in with each other by late season and require care in thinning the brambles. Raspberries come in many fruit colors, and blackberries come in thorned and thornless varieties. In general, black and purple raspberries, and thornless blackberries are less winter hardy than red raspberries. Keep this in mind when selecting varieties. The varieties listed below are tried and true.

Select a full sun site away from frost pockets. Deep till the soil and incorporate compost and topsoil to enrich the soil. Set plants 4-6' apart in rows 6-9' apart in early spring. Water plants well after planting, and maintain moisture through the season. Water stressed brambles will drop their fruit. Apply a 2" layer of mulch to keep weeds down, and conserve moisture. A trellis system can be used to keep canes and berries off the ground. Fertilize with a granular fertilizer one week after planting, or top dress each year with rotted manure.

Pruning brambles requires some reading and practice, so check the resources at the end of this article for help, or stop in at Oakland.

Varieties

Raspberries: Fall Gold: Everbearing plant yields golden, sweet, distinctive fruit on new canes. Ripens in late summer.

Anne Yellow: Everbearing. Ripens August to frost. Very sweet, yellow fruit on new canes.

Brandywine: Purple fruit is large and sweet. Ripens in late summer. Hardy.

Bristol: Black fruit is very large with mild sweet flavor. Ripens August.

Heritage: Everbearing on first year canes. Large sweet, dark red fruit ripens July to frost.

Latham. Reliable favorite. Pure red berry is sweet and firm. Ripens early. Hardy and disease resistant.

Logan: Native 'Black Cap' raspberry. Black fruit with white blush. Distinctive and tart fruit on first year canes.



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Mammoth Red: Thornless. Very large, red berries ripen in June/July. Very Sweet.

Red Caroline: Everbearing variety with large, red berries. Bears fruit June to frost. Productive, hardy and disease resistant.

Blackberries

Chester: Hardest of thornless blackberries. Sweet black fruit ripens in mid August. Semi-erect canes.

Triple Crown: Vigorous, productive plant has numerous canes. Large black fruit ripens early August. Fruit is sweet and firm.

Resources

Midwest Home Fruit Production Guide, Ohio State University Extension, Bulletin #940., 2009.

Illustrated Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening, Barbara Ellis, DK Books, 2005.

Numerous websites and online publications.

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