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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

SP 284-C

Berries

Blackberries and Raspberries in Home Gardens

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Originally developed by Alvin D. Rutledge, Professor
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Blackberries and raspberries (brambles) are a commonly planted small fruit in home gardens. They have vigorous growth, are seldom injured by spring frost and consistently produce high-quality fruit. The fruit is used for jams, jellies, pies and as a fresh fruit. Because of their vigorous growth, brambles should be planted in an area where they can be contained. They lend themselves as effective screens along property lines in landscapes. A reduction in the availability of wild berries make these fruits even more popular in home plantings. By choosing different types of brambles, you can harvest fresh fruit five to six months each year.

Types of Blackberries

Both thorned and thornless blackberries grow well in Tennessee. Each type has its advantages and disadvantages, though the sharp barbs on the thorned type are a negative factor when grown in the home landscape.

Thorned blackberries do not require a trellis, mature their fruit two to three weeks earlier than the thornless varieties and usually have sweeter fruit at maturity. They are propagated by root suckers.

Thornless blackberries are easier to prune and maintain. They produce trailing canes 8 to 12 feet long that are not strong enough to support themselves and require some type of trellis support. They are propagated by tip layering. Sometimes thornless fruit will sunburn because they mature in the hotter part of the summer.

Types of Raspberries:

- ***summer-bearing, red-fruited***
- ***black-fruited***
- ***purple-fruited***
- ***fall-bearing, red-fruited***

Summer-bearing, red-fruited raspberries produce one large crop of fruit in the summer. They usually reproduce by root suckers and may produce a thick hedge after three or four years.

Black-fruited raspberries are not as productive in Tennessee as some of the other types, because of their susceptibility to diseases. They usually do not produce root suckers and are propagated by tip layering. Their canes are not very erect and require trellising.

Purple raspberries mature later in the summer than the red-fruited raspberries . They are vigorous but usually require trellising. They are propagated by tip layering.

Fall-bearing, red-fruited raspberries produce both a fall crop and early summer crop. The fall crop is the largest and produced on the upper portion of the cane, while the smaller summer crop is produced on the lower portion of the cane. Fall-bearing raspberries are often managed for a fall crop only. With this method, all canes are cut at the ground and removed in late winter. The new canes that emerge during the spring will fruit that fall. This is the only type of bramble that will produce fruit the year the canes emerge. All other brambles (both types of blackberries and all other raspberries) produce vegetative canes one year, that fruit and die the next year. Therefore, canes which have fruited must selectively be removed with the vegetative canes left for next year's crop.

Choosing The Best Varieties

There are many varieties of brambles to choose from when planting. Not all of these, however, are adapted to Tennessee's climate. Home gardeners should consider the type of fruit they want and the management required to grow this fruit. The following varieties of blackberries and raspberries are recommended for Tennessee:

Blackberries:

Thorned Varieties

Cheyenne - Large, attractive fruit that ripens mid-June through early July. Canes are erect, vigorous and productive, but susceptible to the disease "rosette" (double blossom).

Shawnee - Fruits are large, attractive and have good flavor. Fruit ripens later and over a longer time than Cheyenne. Plants are productive, erect and vigorous, but also are susceptible to rosette.

Choctaw - Fruit size and flavor similar to Cheyenne and Shawnee but ripens one week earlier (early June). Plant vigor and growth are similar to Shawnee, as is its susceptibility to rosette.

Thornless Varieties

Chester - Fruit quality is good with large size, and the plants are vigorous and productive. Fruit is less sensitive to sunburn and bleeding. Plants have good winter hardiness and are resistant to cane blight.

Hull - Medium- to large-fruited variety with good flavor. Fair winter hardiness.

Navaho - Only thornless variety with erect enough canes not to need trellising. Fruit quality reported to be better than other thornless varieties, but plants may not be as productive. Navaho has shown resistance to "double blossom," a fungus disease common in Tennessee.

Raspberries:

Summer Red

Latham - Plants yield well, but have fair winter hardiness and are susceptible to mosaic virus. Fruit is medium-sized, round, firm and light red.

Titan - An early maturing, large-fruited variety with a high level of aphid resistance. May require trellising. Plants are susceptible to crown gall and root rot.

Black

Cumberland - Also known as "Blackcap." Canes are vigorous and productive. Fruit ripens in mid-summer.

Bristol - Heavier producer than Cumberland, with larger, high-quality fruit.

Jewel - Canes are vigorous and productive. More resistant to disease and larger fruit than Bristol.

Purple

Brandywine - Vigorous plants with some disease resistance. Berries are large, tart and of good quality.

Royalty - Vigorous plants with multiple resistance to insects and the raspberry aphid which carries the mosaic virus. Larger, sweeter fruit than Brandywine.

Fall-bearing red

Heritage - Fruit is medium-sized, firm and high-quality. Produces fruit late summer to first fall frost.

Ruby - Larger fruit than Heritage and matures two weeks earlier. May be susceptible to root rot.

Autumn Bliss - Fruit matures earlier than Heritage and is of higher quality. Plants are less vigorous than Heritage with fewer root suckers produced.

The following table will assist in determining the number of plants to be planted:

Fruit	No. of Plants Per Family Member	Age to Near Peak Production	Yield Per Plant at Peak
Thornless Blackberry	1/2	3	2 gallons
Thorned Blackberry	2	3	1/2 gallon
Raspberries	3	3	1 quart

Selecting and Preparing a Planting Site

If possible, plant blackberries and raspberries a minimum of 300 feet away from wild or existing plantings of brambles, to reduce the potential for disease problems. Avoid areas where tomatoes, potatoes or eggplants have recently been grown, to reduce the potential for verticillium wilt. Plant on a north-facing slope or hillside to reduce injury from spring frost. Almost any soil type, except those that are sandy, poorly drained or droughty, is suitable. The first step in preparing a site is to take a soil sample. Sample boxes and information sheets are available at your county Extension office. Work lime and fertilizer into the soil before planting, in accordance with soil test recommendations. Lay out the row area and kill any weeds or grasses within that area. This should be done in advance of planting so any weed regrowth can be killed.

Planting Correctly

Brambles can be planted any time they are dormant, usually from Nov. 1 to March 15. If a fall planting is made, a mulch at the base of the plant may reduce winter injury.

Either root cuttings or root suckers can be planted. If root cuttings are used, plant them about 3 to 4 inches deep. If root suckers are used, make holes large enough and deep enough to completely spread the roots. Once planting is done, firm the soil around the plant and water well.

Spacings used for blackberries and raspberries are listed below:

Fruit	In-Row Spacing (ft.)	Between-Row Spacing (ft.)
Thornless Blackberries	8	10
Thorned Blackberries	3-4	10
Raspberries	2.5-3	8-10

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Billy G. Hicks, Dean