

## DID YOU KNOW...



# THE BLACKBERRY

Blackberries are present on most continents in the temperate zones. They can be found in mountain regions of the warmest climates. Over 400 species are listed among which figure dwarf plants, bushy types or vine climbers. Those plants are generally perennials and fruits are forming on last year growth. Although blackberries are present as wild plants in northern France, they have not been cultivated until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The popular belief tends to conclude that the land planted with brambles was uncultivated, no one had ever attempted any culture. The problem is actually the difficulty of clearing or working with these plants which are very thorny. The first bramble cultures were made in North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and began with the hybridization of different wild species.

Canada's burr was used in this work because of its great hardness and its frequent absence of thorns. Unfortunately, varieties often developed further south do not adapt well to our rigorous winters. Canada's brambling seedlings have many large, upright or arched stems, almost totally inert. The alternate leaves are composed of 3 to 5 leaflets. The white flowers cluster in terminal clusters of 5 to 35 flowers. Flowering takes place in July and the fruit, first red, becomes black at maturity in August-September. Harvest one or two days after the uniform black coloring has been reached to allow the fruits to fully develop their aroma. Unlike raspberries, the receptacles remain attached to the fruit.

## BLACKBERRY'S SELECTION AND SITE PREPERATION

Apart from the planting distances on the row which are larger (1 to 2 m), the choice and preparation of the site, as well as the planting and the maintenance of the mulberry tree, are the same as for the raspberry. For the size of the thornless mulberry crawler, group the new rods and tie them loosely on the first wire (60 cm from the ground) of a two-wire tying. Cut the branches to 10 cm from the main stems.





# BLACKBERRY PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE



The following year, after trimming the damaged or excess stems, attach the others to the second wire (160 cm from the ground) for harvesting. Proceed as for the previous year for the new stems.

The trowel should be nearly 2M high with posts spaced 3 to 5 M. Harvest from August to October when the fruit is very ripe. At the end of the season, remove completely the stems that have brought back. Mulberry trees are less demanding than raspberries in fertilization but are more fragile to changes in the environment. This is why field crops can produce variable results, whereas near a vegetation shelter near the undergrowth they produce well.

The sunshine remains important, but exposure to the wind will be harmful. Other requirements are similar to raspberries. The rusticity of the blackberry is less great than that of the raspberry. It will be important to protect the winter by placing the stems on the ground, or in potted plants by placing the plants on the ground and covering them with a winter cover. The use of repellent and bait station to rodents and mullet becomes necessary.



## BLACKBERRY'S SUB SHELTERED AND SUBSTRATE CULTURES

The blackberry fits very well with the culture under shelters with or without substrate. The substrate recommendations remain the same as strawberry and raspberry. The planting distances and the trellising are the same as before.

