

Care Guidelines

TRAILING BLACKBERRIES

www.farwestlandscape.net

5728 West State Street

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Cultural Requirements:

Blackberries will thrive on most soil types, but good drainage is desirable with most varieties. Soils that are naturally fertile, easily worked, and of good moisture holding capacity are the most suitable. While not as cold hardy as the raspberry, many varieties of blackberries are known to do well.

Fertility:

Blackberries respond extremely well to balanced commercial blends of fertilizer applied at blossoming time. Blackberries also thrive on organic fertilizers such as barn yard manure. Good soil moisture should be maintained by irrigation for fruit production. Soil should drain well so roots do not sit in water.

Planting Instructions:

Soak roots in water for a couple of hours before planting. Our two-year-old transplants should be planted in March or April when soil is thawed and dry enough to work. Plant the transplants at about the same depth the plant grew at the nursery, covering any white sprouts arising from the crown. Avoid wadding the roots in the planting hole, pruning them back if necessary. Avoid pruning of roots on thornless varieties, since they may give rise to thorny suckers if so treated. Spacing is recommended at 4 ft between plants and rows at 6 ft apart.

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 harms way until they are ready to be trained. These canes will not bear fruit until the following summer when they are two years old. After harvest, the two-year-old fruiting canes are removed as close to the ground as possible without injuring the new canes. The Thornless Evergreen is harvested late and must be spring trained. In cold climates, spring training is a must, since canes left on the ground over the winter are less apt to be damaged by cold. The ideal time to spring train is after the danger of freezing weather and 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 5' 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. Various innovative methods of training are used with wire trellises. The most common trellis has two wires: one 5' high and the other 3' high. The canes to be trained are divided into two parts and each taken separately to the top wire. Then the canes are brought down to the lower wire and turned back toward the plant with one or two twists. Excess cane length can be removed.