




# Boysenberry, Blackberry (*Rubus* spp.)

Type	Deciduous/ Evergreen	Height x Width (metres)	Spacing (metres)	Pollinator	Soil type	Sun	Moisture	Shelter	Plant	Harvest
Canes	D	2 x 2	2.5	Y/N				Y	Autumn	Summer to autumn

## CAUTION:

*Wild blackberries are a vigorous, painfully thorny weed. Don't get cuttings from the wild – buy cultivated Blackberry varieties.*

## Site

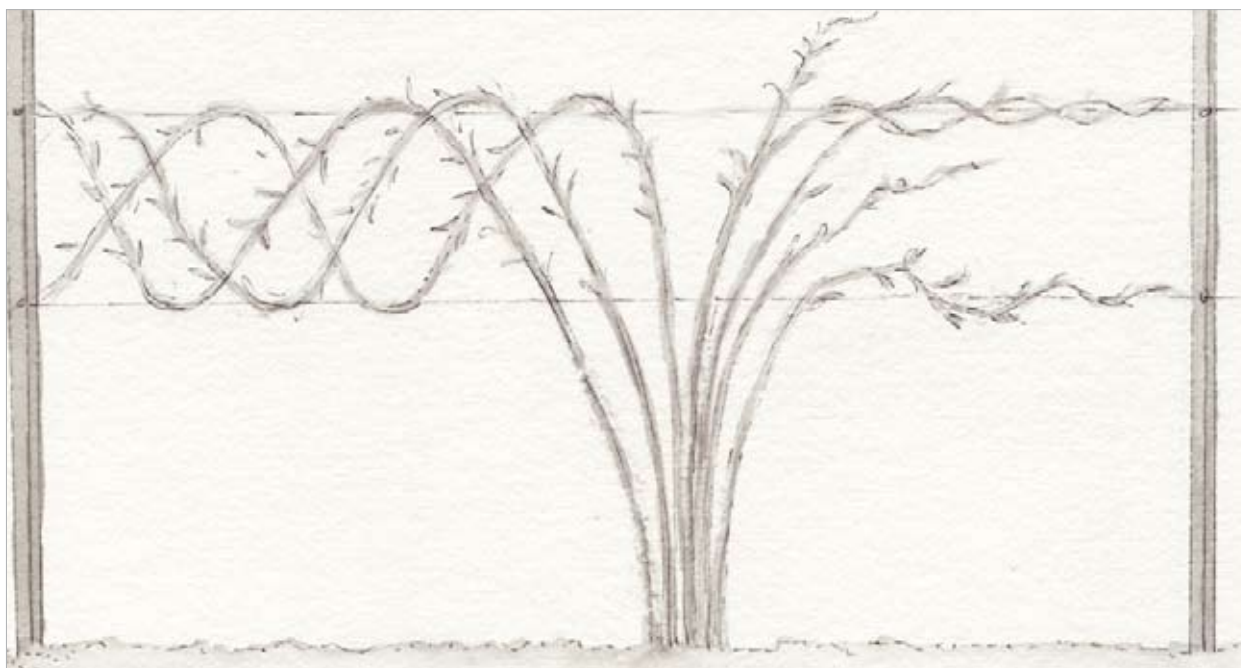
- Needs a sheltered position – full sun helps with flavour, but happy in part shade.
- Soil needs to retain moisture but NOT be heavy or waterlogged.

## Care

- Needs a support structure. Set up a strong trellis or set of 3 wires, at least 1.8m high, with the first wire 0.5m from the ground. (Don't plant against a fence – suckers will come up on the other side.)

- Plant in autumn, along with plenty of well-rotted manure and compost. Space the plants out well for good air circulation.
- At planting, shorten the canes to 15cm so the roots can get established.
- Water regularly during summer – dryness affects the current crop AND the next year's canes (an irrigation system is good for regular, light watering).
- Has shallow roots, so hand weed carefully and keep well mulched.
- Add a little fertiliser in August, and also in late summer before the new canes grow.
- Pollinated by bees and wind. Some need cross-pollination with another variety.

**Train the canes between two wires – you can weave, tie or twist them in place**





## Training & pruning

### *Erect-growing types*

- Tie the canes up against the support structure. Head back the new growth at 2m high and 1m wide, to encourage the development of fruiting laterals.
- A fan shape will let the sun reach all the fruit – choose the best four or six canes and cut each one at 15cm past the top wire, spacing them 10–15cm apart as fan 'ribs'. Thread them in and out between the wires and tie them in place.

### *Trailing types*

- Tie, twist or weave the canes onto horizontal wires (see diagram).
- First-year canes grow leaves early in the season, and then form flower buds in the late summer for the next season's fruiting. In the first summer, thread the canes in and out of the wires and tie them in place.
- In the second summer, train the new canes straight up through the centre and fasten them along the top wire. This will keep them separated from the fruit-bearing canes, and help keep the plant under control – especially important for Blackberries.
- Immediately after fruiting, cut the fruited canes down to ground level and weave the new canes in and out of the lower wires.
- Remove all prunings from your property to reduce the risk of diseases and pests.
- Make sure you don't let the plant's tips touch the ground, where they could sprout roots and become a thicket.

## Companions

- Marigolds, chives.

## Harvest

- The trailing types fruit between December and January. Blackberry fruits in late summer to autumn.
- Pick them when they are dark coloured and have softened. Handle them gently so they don't squash.
- Eat fresh, use in desserts, yoghurt, ice cream, drinks, or bottle, make jam.

## Health

- High levels of vitamins A, C and E, folic acid, antioxidants, minerals and fibre.

## Recommended varieties

*Boysenberry*: Tasman, McNicholl's Choice, Mapua

*Blackberry*: Black Satin, Navaho

## Plants for free

Multiply your plants by *tip layering*:

- In early autumn, choose a strong healthy cane on a disease-free plant and bring its tip down to soil level. Dig a hole in this spot, with the near side angled towards the parent plant.
- Bury the stem tip and peg it down with a piece of wire.
- When the tip shows new growth in spring, cut the new plant from the parent plant and tie the parent plant back upright.



Tip layering