



BLACKBERRIES

Like full sun and a moist rich soil. Grow in rows, spacing the plants at least 2 m (6 ft) apart and with support if possible, stakes or trellis. They are a very vigorous grower up to 3 m (10 ft) easily! Before planting, remove and discard the packaging materials and soak the roots in a pail of water for several hours. While soaking the roots of Blackberries, keep a towel or large rag wrapped loosely around them to keep moisture in and light out (keeping the roots covered in the bucket until you actually put the plant in the ground). For some reason not clearly understood even by fruit scientists, Blackberry bushes whose roots are exposed to bright sunlight may not survive transplanting. Adding compost, aged manure or a balanced organic fertilizer to your soil as you prepare the site will help plants get established. Dig a hole wide enough to accommodate the roots and deep enough to allow you to set the crown (the point where the stems of the plant meet the roots) 1in below the surface of the surrounding soil. Place the roots in the planting hole and arrange them like the spokes of a wheel or in whatever fashion appears natural, but take care not to break them, for they are fragile. Holding the crown at the proper level with one hand, push the soil back into the hole with the other, working soil around the roots to prevent the formation of air pockets. Proper planting depth for Blackberries should be 1/2-to-1in deeper than the soil line on the stem. Then firm the soil around the crown with your feet. It bears large, firm, sweet fruit and is very resistant to cane blight. Full ripening begins in mid-August and continues into September. Fruit is borne on previous years growth, so cut canes to the ground after they are done bearing. To maintain plants, be sure to water in dry weather and use mulch to conserve soil moisture and control weeds. Pruning requirements in the second and subsequent year- Second year: prune out fruit-bearing canes soon after harvest. Third year and thereafter: in late winter before growth resumes, thin to leave 5-7 strong, healthy sideways-growing canes per foot of row (the canes growing sideways from the main stems are the fruit-bearing canes). Continue to prune out old fruit-bearing canes after harvest.