

JUST FRUITS

AND EXOTICS

BLACKBERRY, BOYSENBERRY, ELDERBERRY *and* RASPBERRY

INTRODUCTION

Summer and berries—searching the roadside for patches of tasty wild berries for jams and fresh eating. Every country family has done it, but some new cultivars make it easy to have that same flavor in a patch in your backyard (and some varieties are thornless). Blackberries, boysenberries, elderberries and raspberries (Yes, we have a raspberry for the South) are all self-pollinating, so plant one or plant 100!

USES IN LANDSCAPE

Brambles can be upright hedge varieties or trailing varieties that require a trellis. Use a row of hedging blackberries to define your garden's edge. Add a boysenberry or raspberry trellis beside a path and have a berry on the way down the driveway. The hedging growth of elderberry bushes can add a graceful screen to your property or when planted as a single specimen develops into a graceful 10 foot shrub with arching canes, beautiful in flower as well as when fruiting. Regardless of which berry you choose, don't forget to plant a few extra plants for all the wildlife they'll attract.

PLANTING + CULTURE

SITE SELECTION

Well-drained, sandy, rich soils are preferred. Brambles do not tolerate flooding and may grow poorly in mucky soils unless planted in raised mounds. Elderberries on the other hand love wetlands. All berry plants will grow more vigorously and produce more fruit in full sun.

SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Brambles prefer slightly acid soil (pH 6.0-6.5), but soils of up to moderate alkalinity are tolerated. Elderberries aren't picky about soil types and will thrive in acid or alkaline soils. If you are in doubt ...

PLANTING + CULTURE

SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING

...continued

about the acidity of your soil, take a soil sample to the Cooperative Extension Agent in your county for a soil test. Enrich the bed with 1 to 3 inches of aged manure or mushroom compost. Beds may be mulched with organic mulches like hay, oat straw, bark and leaves.

For trailing varieties and raspberry plants, you will need a trellis. To construct a simple trellis use two 7-8 feet upright posts sunk 2 feet in the ground leaving 5-6 feet above ground. Anchor end posts. Attach three 9-gauge wires at 18-inch intervals beginning 24 inches from the ground. Place posts no more than 20 feet apart for best stability (diagram has posts at 10 ft.). Dig your planting hole 5 feet from the posts, leaving 10 feet between plants.

Plant erect varieties at least 2 to 3 feet apart in the row with 15 feet between rows. Trailing varieties need to be spaced 10 foot apart in rows 15 foot apart. Space Elderberry plants at least 5 feet apart so they will have room to spread. Before planting make sure the plants are well watered and the soil in your planting hole is not excessively dry. Remove the plant from the pot and place in the planting hole. To avoid burying too deep, make sure plant is positioned with the top most roots at the soil line. If plants have a tightly packed root system gently work the root ball loose. Water thoroughly to settle the roots and eliminate air pockets. **Do NOT put fertilizer in the planting hole.** Only apply fertilizer if it is the correct time of year (see Fertilization section below).

Six to 12 canes per plant should produce 2-3 gallons of fruit, if plants are properly fertilized and watered.

FERTILIZATION

The type of fertilizer you choose may be chemical or organic. Make sure that the fertilizer contains iron, zinc, manganese, magnesium, molybdenum, copper and boron. These minor elements are very important to plants and most soils are low in these elements. Application rates vary according to age of plant. See chart below:

Starter Fertilizer & Soil (Apply at Planting)	Fertilizer to Maintain (Apply Early March, Late May, & Late July)
Espoma Bio-tone® Starter Plus Mix Mushroom Compost in Soil	Espoma Tree-tone®

Notes:

- Follow Instructions on Bag for how much to apply each time.
- Months to Fertilize vary based on your zone. Fertilize 3 times per year. We recommend the 1st fertilization starting after the last Freeze of the winter (Late February/Early March in zone 8) & the last Fertilization being no later than August or even June/July in some of the colder zones 7 & below.)
- Fertilizing too late in the year in colder climates will promote new growth, which will be subject to freeze damage.

See our “Planting a Tree Correctly” Guide & Espoma Bio-tone® and Tree-tone® Fact Sheets on our website for more info.

HEDGE ROW PLANTINGS

By the 3rd year the plants should have grown together, so apply your fertilizer for every four foot of row, spreading the fertilizer in a four foot wide band down the row. For Elderberries use 1 cup of 10-10-10 or 10-0-10 for each year of a elderberry’s age in late February, late May and late July/early August (i.e. 1 cup per application for a one year-old elderberry, 2 cups for a two year-old). Continue increasing fertilizer yearly until application rate reaches 4 cups. If using Citrus Tone, use 2 cups for each year of elderberry’s age. Increase each year, until you reach 8 cups.

WATER

The first weeks are the critical time for the establishment of a new plant. Water every other day for the first week after they are set out. After plants are established, water thoroughly twice a week on light soils and once a week on clay soils. Soak the entire root system deeply - this usually takes 40-50 minutes. Be sure to mulch your plants with 2 to 3 inches of hay, bark or leaves. Pull mulch a couple of inches away from the stems for good air circulation. Mulch will help hold water in the soil as well as add organic content to your soil. Water regularly, especially during dry periods. Fruit may drop prematurely if insufficiently irrigated during dry spells.

PRUNING

For trellised varieties: Fruit is produced on 2 year-old canes, which die after fruiting. New canes that sprout in the spring will fruit the following year. In the first year after planting, the canes you planted will fruit. Thread the original canes you planted through the wires for the fruiting season. Allow the current year’s new canes to run along the ground. After fruiting, cut and remove the canes that have fruited. Thread the new canes through the trellis. Spread canes evenly through the trellis and thread carefully to avoid breakage and support the canes. For erect or upright varieties: Fruit is produced on 2 year-old canes, which die after fruiting. New canes that sprout in the spring will fruit the following year. In the first year after planting, the canes you planted will fruit and should be removed after they die. The new canes produced from the original canes you planted in spring, should be topped to about 40 inches in early summer to encourage lateral branching, and then allowed to grow until the winter dormant season. In each succeeding year, remove the current year’s fruiting canes after they produce fruit. Elderberry: Fruits each year and like blueberries extend themselves through suckers that come up from the roots. In time elderberries can become a thick hedge and will require clearing out of old and dead branches/stems.

VARIETIES

A detailed Variety List can be found on our website: justfruitsandexotics.com