



Brambles are from the Rubus family, which includes such favourites as blackberries, tayberries, boysenberries and raspberries. Most brambles prefer moderate summers and cold winters.

Brambles will ripen from mid-summer until autumn. The first bramble to ripen is the boysenberry followed by loganberries and blackberries. Raspberries ripen in either early summer or autumn, depending on the variety.

Brambles prefer a slightly acidic soil that is free-draining. They detest waterlogged soil even if it is only for a short time, so drainage is essential. But they do require adequate watering in summer. When planting use Blood & Bone then feed annually with Citrus & Fruit Tree Fertiliser in spring.



Pests and Diseases

Budmoth, leafroller, Botrytis, cane blight, downy mildew (dryberry), rust and, of course, birds. This seems a formidable list but a good spraying programme will take care of most problems. First spray with lime sulphur while the canes are dormant. When the buds start to appear spray with copper and oil. (See our winter spraying brochure for more detail.) Before and after flowering you should spray with Yates Success Ultra, Yates Nature's Way Fungus Spray or Yates Nature's Way Fruit & Veggie Gun. Remember to cover fruiting plants with bird netting so you get to eat the berries instead of our feathery friends devouring them. Never spray fruit within seven days of harvest.

Varieties

Blackberry (thorn-free)

This has red fruit that turn black when they are ripe.

Loganberry

A cross between a blackberry and a raspberry. Loganberries crop heavily, have an acidic but tangy flavour and are good for cooking.

Tayberry

This is also a cross between a blackberry and a raspberry but has larger berries and is less acidic than the loganberry, with more of a blackberry flavour. Tayberries are very aromatic and are nice eaten fresh.

Boysenberry

There are lots of different varieties. Most have thorns but there are some semi-thornless varieties available.

Raspberries

Again there are lots of different varieties available with colours ranging from traditional reds to dark purple, black or even golden yellow. There are two main types of raspberries: summer fruiting and autumn fruiting. With autumn varieties all canes should be cut to ground level in July/August. Then as new canes grow in spring and summer they should be tied to wires or supported against a fence. With summer-fruiting varieties, immediately after picking, cut down all the canes that have fruited and keep six to nine of the best new canes from the current season for fruiting next season.

Currants and Gooseberries

These belong to the Ribes family. Currants prefer a slightly acidic soil and an abundant supply of water in summer. They can tolerate a semi-shaded position but require winter chilling. Currants can grow to two metres high and should be planted two metres apart, but can also be grown as a hedge with plants as close as 60cm.

Black currants fruit on new season's wood, whereas red and white currants fruit on wood that is two or more years old. Pruning of black currants should be done from May to September. Keep six to eight shoots from the base of the plant and every year remove two or three of the older, thicker, darker canes. No wood should be kept for more than four years. Cut out any low and weak branches.

Gooseberries and red and white currants will fruit on the same wood for a number of years (much like an apple tree), so each year cut out any diseased wood and crowding within the middle of the bush. A red or white currant should have a small trunk up to 40cm high. Aim to have about eight main branches in a vase shape. After five or six years remove one of the main branches down to the lowest shoot, making sure you choose a different branch each year.





Pruning and Training

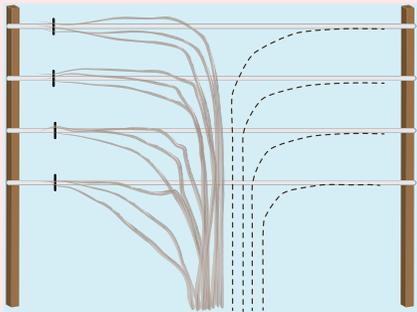
Brambles are very vigorous growers, and all brambles need some sort of training and support to maximise production. A plant that is left to its own devices will grow quite happily but will generally not fruit well. The only exception to this rule is the raspberry.

Plant two to three metres apart. Brambles will fruit on last season's new growth. In summer/autumn when you have picked the last of your fruit you should immediately remove the canes that have fruited, down to ground level, and leave the canes that have just grown over the spring and summer, removing any weak canes or surplus growth. Normally the canes that have fruited are a lot darker than the new canes. Cane tips should be cut off when they have reached a desired height and trained as follows:

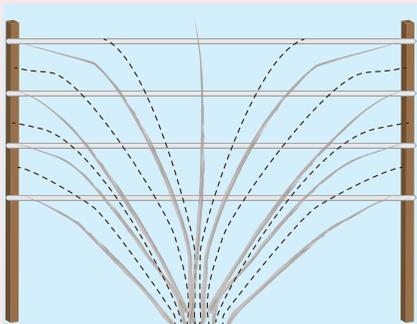
Diagram A shows the easiest way to train your bramble. As the new canes grow they can immediately be tied up opposite the fruiting ones.

The training method shown in diagram B will give you heavier fruit production but can be a bit more time consuming.

A



B

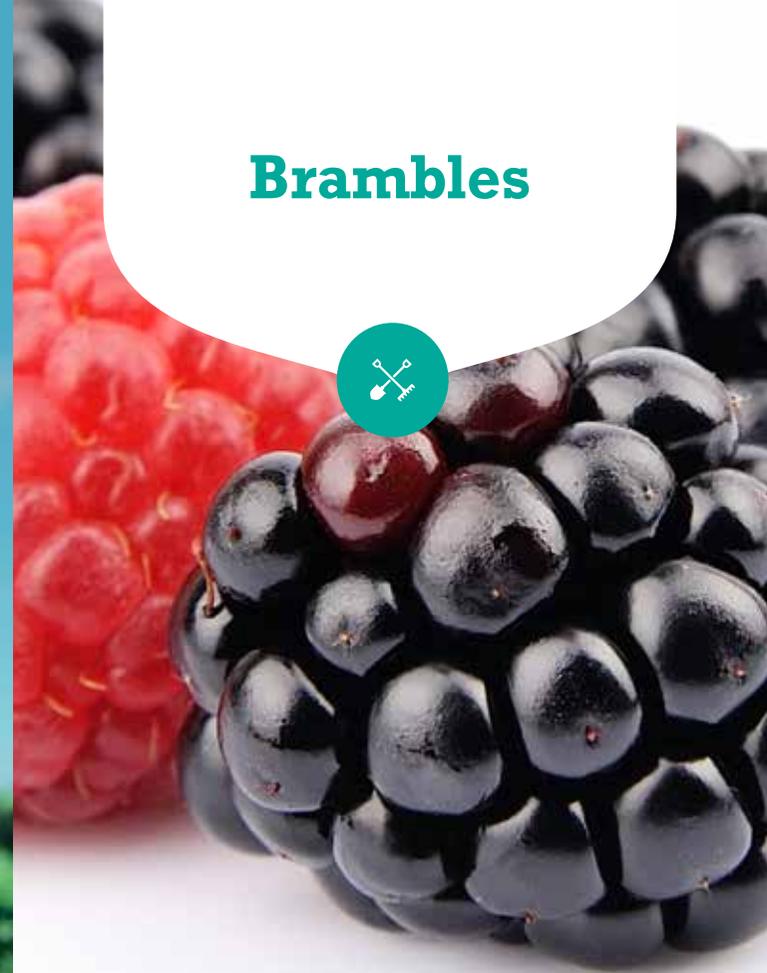


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Brambles



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