

BLACKBERRIES—HOW TO GROW THEM SUCCESSFULLY AND MARKET THEM PROFITABLY.

In dealing with the above subject I shall confine my remarks strictly to facts based upon *actual personal experience*. Like all other small fruits, the cultivation of the blackberry depends first upon the character and preparation of the soil, and, second, upon its subsequent treatment.

The soil should be plowed deep, subsoiled, and thoroughly prepared; but unlike the raspberry, it does best on rather light soil, and in sunny exposures. Moist heavy land in which the raspberry luxuriates produces a rank growth of canes, that the fall of the year finds green, immature and subject to winter kill. Moderately fertile, warm, well drained (but not dry) land is the best. The blackberry for best results does not require the fertility that the raspberry does. Its inclination is to grow too rank, at best, and its needs are mellowness, rather than richness of soil, therefore extra care should be taken in the preparation of the soil, by deep plowing and thoroughly loosening the subsoil.

PLANTING:—The blackberry, like the raspberry plant, should always be set while in a dormant condition. The ground should be furrowed out five or six inches deep and eight feet apart. Set the plants three feet apart with the horizontal root lengthwise with the furrow; cover up the furrow level with the surface. If the ground is very poor scatter along the furrows before planting a liberal amount of muck or well rotted manure.

CULTIVATION:—Success with the blackberry depends a great deal more upon proper management than culture. All the cultivation necessary is to keep them clean by frequent stirring of the soil with cultivator and hoe. They should be cultivated shallow at all times. More good can be accomplished at the proper time, in pruning, with the thumb and finger, than with all the modern pruning implements ever invented. When the young shoots get to be from three

to three and a half feet high, pinch out the top, leave at least one and a half feet of space between the canes in the row; treat all other suckers as weeds. This summer top pruning will force the canes to throw out laterals and grow in a bush form. Do no more pruning until the spring of the year, when just before the new growth starts, take the pruning shears and clip off all laterals to from four to six buds to the branch. After fruiting season is over remove all old canes, to give you a chance to properly care for the new ones for the next year's crop.

A blackberry patch can be made a "thing of beauty" as well as profit, instead of a "wilderness and nuisance," as it is too frequently the case.

MARKETING:—As to marketing the fruit I will confine myself to a few axioms, for brevity's sake. It is not conclusive evidence that a blackberry is ripe because it is black. They should never be picked for at least forty-eight hours after turning black. They should never be gathered while they are wet either with rain or dew; always pick them when perfectly dry. Market them exclusively in shallow pint boxes. Get them to market always the same day and as soon after they are picked as possible.

—Strawberry Culturist.

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"And I miss you more in autumn, when in rustling corn-
fields yellow,
Reapers sing their lays of gladness, when the plovers
loudly call,
When the woods are gold emblazoned and the apple or-
chards mellow
And the bramble red and purple where the ripened ber-
ries fall."