

# FGCU Food Forest

## Plant Database

### Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*)

#### Quick Facts

**Origin:** Asia, North America, and Asia  
**Description:** Very dark purple with smooth, fragile skin. In the middle of the cluster is a greenish-white core that extends to almost the bottom of the berry.

**Uses:** Food, medicinal, and blackberry canes and vines were used to make twine  
**Harvest:** Usually peak during June in the South, and in July in the North  
**Flower:** Blooms in June; usually white  
**Tolerance:** Can tolerate some shade, however requires dry soil

**General Description:** Blackberries are a dark purple with smooth, fragile skin. In the middle of the cluster is a greenish-white core that spreads to nearly the bottom of the berry. Blackberries can be regularly confused with raspberries; however raspberries (including black raspberries) have a hollow center.



- **Native Origin:** It is rather difficult to trace the precise origin since blackberries flourish all over the world, but it is expected the first were in Asia, North or South America or in Europe. Greeks and Romans used blackberries for remedies, and Native Americans used them for food, medicine and to bleach animal skins.
- **General History:** The formal name of the blackberry is *Rubus fruticosus*, and they have always been considered wild; therefore back then they were not cultured. Those who wanted the berries would travel to where a bush was growing and gather them. Development of the blackberry is rather modern and was done generally in America.
- **Season of Harvest:** Between June and July (summer).
- **Medicinal Uses:** Blackberries have been used to treat bowel problems and fever for more than 2,000 years. The berry itself was not used in medicinal applications but the root, bark and leaf was in which they were boiled in water and given as medicine for

whooping cough. Other illnesses thought to be cured by blackberry were bites from venomous animals, boils and sore throats.

- **Culinary Uses:** Blackberries have been used to make all kinds of sweets, and eaten plain for centuries. It's also used to make wine and cordials, pie, crumble, and jam.

| <b>Blackberry</b>                |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Scientific Classification</b> |              |
| Kingdom:                         | Plantae      |
| (unranked):                      | Angiosperms  |
| (unranked):                      | Eudicots     |
| (unranked):                      | Rosids       |
| Order:                           | Rosales      |
| Family:                          | Rosaceae     |
| Subfamily:                       | Rosoideae    |
| Tribe:                           | Rubeae       |
| Genus:                           | <i>Rubus</i> |

### **Sources**

Tanner, P. (2010). *Blackberry: A Brief History*.

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