Blackberries will grow in almost any type of soil. They do require a steady moisture supply, especially in light or sandy soils. They do not require a high fertility level. In most garden soils little or no fertilizer is necessary to maintain vigorous growth. If fertilizer is needed, apply a flower or vegetable fertilizer around bloom time. Keep your blackberry planting clean to eliminate weed competition and sucker growth. However, do not cultivate deeply around thornless varieties; if the feeder roots are damaged, they will send up thorny suckers that will need to be pruned out.

The crowns of blackberry plants are perennial: new canes arise from them every year. The canes themselves are usually biennial; each one lives for two years. During the first year, they grow and send out laterals (side branches). The second year, small branches grow from buds on the one-year-old canes. Fruit is borne on these side branches. After fruiting, the entire cane dies, and new canes sprout next year from the root. All of the blackberries that Sky carries are fully hardy in the Puget Sound region.

Trailing varieties should be planted 8 to 12 feet apart. They do best trained to a 2-wire trellis, one wire 5 feet above the ground, the lower one about 3 feet above the ground. Prune blackberries in late summer after they have fruited. Completely remove the old canes that have fruited. Thin the new canes, leaving 6 to 12 of the sturdiest to bear next season's fruit. DO NOT PRUNE THE TIPS OF THE CANES ON TRAILING VARIETIES.

The semi-trailing varieties such as tayberry can be planted closer, usually 4 to 7 feet. Semi-trailing varieties can be left to trail, or they can be trained like a black raspberry: when the canes are between 4 and 5 feet, cut off the tip to encourage lateral branches to grow out. The following spring, cut the laterals back to 12-18 inches. The main canes should then be tied to a wire for support.
REGULAR BLACKBERRY VARIETIES (HAVE THORNS)

Olallie Large, shiny black firm berry is sweeter, less tart than most blackberry varieties. Ripens very early—June/July.

THORNLESS BERRY VARIETIES

Thornless Boysenberry Very large, non shiny, dark maroon berries. Soft, very juicy flesh. Distinctive rich tangy flavor and very aromatic. Excellent for fresh eating, freezing, jams, pastries, juice, syrup, and wine. Ripens in July. Hardy to -10° F. Vigorous trailing vines.

Triple Crown Blackberry Very large, sweet, shiny berry. Great fresh or in jelly, toppings, or juice. Begins ripening in early August, can continue until frost. Very hardy and vigorous. Very high yields—as much as 30 pounds per established plant. Ripens late July. Semi-trailing habit.

THORNLESS PATIO VARIETY (BUSHEL AND BERRY)
Baby Cakes® Thornless. Bred to be perfect in containers or small areas. The canes are upright, requiring no support, and grow only 3-4' tall. The berries are large and sweet with true blackberry favor. In our region, Baby Cakes will ripen a crop in summer and often a second crop in the fall.