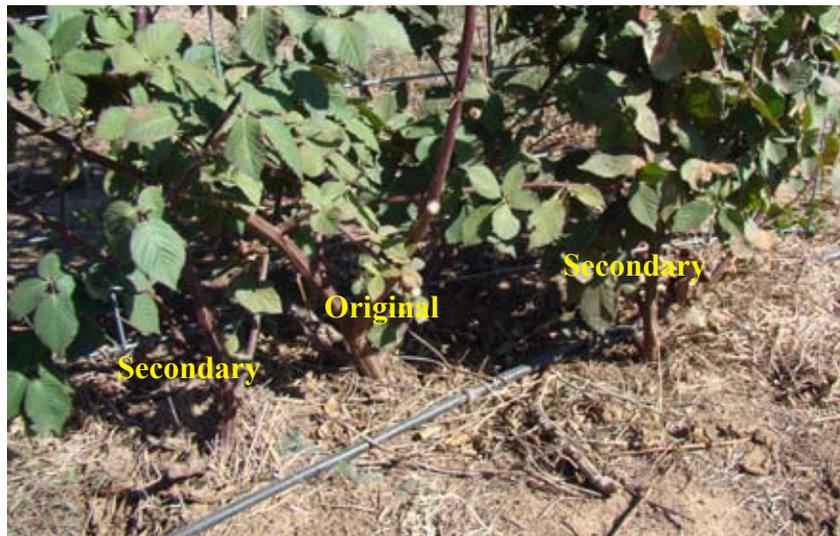


KEEPING BLACKBERRIES IN A CORRAL

Carl Whitcomb PhD, Lacebark Inc., Stillwater, OK

Blackberries have gone through major transformations in recent years. From irregular mounds of stems covered with sharp spines and small fruits to upright growing stems, with NO spines and large, delicious fruits. To be able to reach in among stems and grasp one or more blackberries the size of your thumb and then remove your hand without scratches and blood, to a country boy that picked wild blackberries for years, this is an amazing improvement.

However, one aspect of growing blackberries has not changed --- their adventuresome, spreading nature. Plant one blackberry and by year three, you will have many blackberry plants, with some six feet or more from the original. This aggressive spreading feature prevents many gardeners from planting blackberries as well as some other brambles.



RootTrapper® containers are the answer.

In-ground containers made of RootTrapper® material at least 18 and preferred, 24 inches in diameter with grounder bottoms. This container design allows roots to grow through the bottom and support the plant, yet keeps blackberries and other brambles from spreading. Blackberries spread by underground stems called rhizomes, which grow a few inches below the soil surface. When the tip of a rhizome contacts the fibrous inner wall of the RootTrapper® container it is trapped, cannot go through the fabric and as a result, the tip stops growing. Secondary shoots develop on the rhizome, but all are restricted to the interior of the RootTrapper® container.

Blackberry stems emerge, grow and set flower buds the first year, flower and fruit the second year, then die and should be removed. Each growing season a new crop of shoots are produced as replacements. Using the RootTrapper® container the original plant, and second year and subsequent plants are all contained. No more blackberries coming up in unwanted places. Thornless varieties Natchez (ppaf), Apache and Navaho have grown well, with excellent fruit production, even in alkaline soils of central Oklahoma

RootTrapper® containers are available from RootMaker® products, Huntsville, AL, see www.rootmaker.com or 1-800-824-3941

