

April 18, 2001

Bramble Information

SPRING/SUMMER BRAMBLE CHORES 2001

Here is a brief summary of chores for the next few months to prepare your brambles for the upcoming growing season. If you have any questions give me a call.

PRUNING

- Should be completed by early spring
- Fall Bearing Raspberries: Fall bearing (actually mid to late summer for most of us in NC) raspberries fruit at the top of the current season's canes ("primocanes"). The simplest way to manage these varieties is to mow them off at ground level during the dormant season. Be sure to mow them off close to the ground so that new shoots come from the roots and not from lateral buds on cane stumps.
- Blackberries and summer fruiting raspberries. These types of brambles bear fruit on second year canes. During the winter prune out the spent floricanes from the previous season. The remaining primocanes are thinned 3-4 / ft².

HERBICIDES

- Apply preemergent herbicide in spring if not applied in fall. There are several chemicals that are labeled for use in NC depending on age of plating and time of application, see your NC AG Chem. Manual.
- Apply post emergent herbicides as needed. Be sure that the chemical you are using is labeled for bearing plants, many herbicides cannot be used beyond the first year.

INSECT AND DISEASE CONTROL PREBLOOM

- Apply liquid lime sulphur or Bordeaux for control of anthracnose in late winter or early spring before new buds are less than 1/2" long
- Crown borers can be a problem in the early spring, as well as aphids, thrips, Japanese beetle, fruitworm, rose chafer, stink bugs and psyllids. Catch these early w/ a prebloom spray, see your NC AG Chem. Manual.

BLOOM:

Double blossom (AKA rosette). Primocanes are infected in the spring or early summer, but disease symptoms are not evident until the following year when new growth begins on the fruiting canes. The best thing to do is to remove the infected floricanes to disrupt the cycle and treat the primocanes w/fungicides. Barbara Smith, USDA plant pathologist has devised an aggressive spray program for this disease in Mississippi, you can contact me for a copy of the paper she wrote for the North American Bramble Growers Association Proceedings.

Botrytis: Apply fungicides at early bloom and repeat at full bloom.

HARVEST:

- Chemically control aphids, thrips, Japanese beetle, fruitworm, rose chafer, stink bugs and psyllids -3-5 days before harvest, spray for Botrytis.
- Watch and control leaf spot, double blossom, crown borer, scale, Japanese beetle and mites

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HARVEST:

- prune out spent floricanes after harvest to facilitate air flow through canopy and reduce disease spread.

HARVEST

- Harvest blackberries and raspberries at least twice a week. This will insure that you get the fruit at its optimal ripeness and minimize the spread of diseases.
- For blackberries intended for pick-your-own and local sales, it is better to wait until the color has a dull appearance to maximize flavor. At this stage the berries will have higher sugars but reduced shelf life and are best suited for local markets.
- Raspberries can be picked when the fruit is easily separated from the plant when gently pulled.
- Experienced pickers can pick 10 lbs of fruit an hour, although the average can range from 6 to 14 lbs, pick-your-own people will harvest on the below the lower end of that range.
- Instruct pickers carefully on how to pick to ensure a good pack. Picker should pick all ripe berries. Berries not picked when they are ready will be too ripe by the next picking.
- Pick directly into selling containers. Processing or PYO berries can be placed in deeper containers.

PRECOOLING, STORAGE AND SHIPPING

- Pick only firm fruit and place directly into selling containers
- For maximum shelf life, harvest berries in the morning and remove berries from field as soon as possible, place in cooler at temperatures between 32 and 45F and high relative humidity
- Berries held without cooling are inferior in quality and appearance

IRRIGATION

- get irrigation ready to go, bramble plants need about 1"-2" water/week

TRELLISES

- Make any last minute repairs before canes start growing

FERTILIZER

- Place nitrogenous fertilizers in row before new canes emerge in spring. Raspberries: Apply 500-800 lbs of 10-10-10 per acre in split applications. Apply half in Feb-March and the remainder in April-May. Spread uniformly across the row or side dress with half on each side of row in a 3 foot wide band.

Blackberries: In established plantings apply 60 to 80 lb/acre N. Nitrogen can be applied in split or single applications. If using a split application, apply the first portion at bud break and the remainder just after harvest. Ammonium nitrate is the most common form of N used on blackberries. The incorporation of P and K should be based on soil test recommendations, see table below.

P level Action Form

< 50 lb/acre Add 60-80 lb/acre P₂O₅ Triple superphosphate

>50 lb/acre None

K level Action Form

< 150 lb/acre Add 60 lb/acre K₂O Potassium sulfate

250-300lb/acre Add 30 lb/acre Potassium sulfate

MARKETING

- Make a crop estimate, so you know how much and what to expect from the plantings
- Make sure you have enough containers, low profile clamshells with pads are best for brambles as the fruit won't get squished as much by their own weight and the pad absorbs some moisture
- PYO-Get your signs ready for directions to your farm, and for use on-farm (prices, directions etc) and order advertising.
- Contact your buyers if you are selling to retail markets and give them a crop estimate and timetable of when fruit will be available.
- Order advertising

OTHER THINGS

-If plants were set last year in rows that were fumigated and had plastic over the rows, open up the plastic to allow primocanes to emerge and fill in the hedgerow especially for semi erect types, trailing types tend to stay in hills)

-Send me pictures of pretty, ugly or otherwise interesting bramble shots. I will be upgrading my web site this summer and would like to include lots of bramble pictures.

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