Illini Hardy Blackberry

Rubus 'Illini Hardy'

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4

Group/Class: Floricane - Summer Bearing

Description:

One of the hardiest blackberries, this variety produces delicious fruit for fresh eating or preserves in summer; blackberries are quite shrubby looking and require careful placement in the landscape, a specific pruning regimen and protection from birds

Edible Qualities

Illini Hardy Blackberry is a medium-sized shrub that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. It produces clusters of black heart-shaped berries which are usually ready for picking in mid summer. The berries have a sweet taste and a juicy texture.

The berries are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Baking
- Preserves

Features & Attributes

Illini Hardy Blackberry has rich green deciduous foliage on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth. The fuzzy oval compound leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color. It features an abundance of magnificent black berries in mid summer.



Illini Hardy Blackberry fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Illini Hardy Blackberry fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is an open multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage. This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep. Each spring, cut back all dead and two-year old canes to the ground, leaving only last year's growth standing. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering
- Disease
- Spiny

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Illini Hardy Blackberry is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping

Planting & Growing

Illini Hardy Blackberry will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. This is a self-pollinating variety, so it doesn't require a second plant nearby to set fruit.

This shrub may not always play well with others; as such, it is best grown in its own designated garden space or isolated area of an edibles garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.