

# Blackberries for the north

A new series of blackberry varieties from Arkansas have made it possible for us to grow blackberries in North Dakota.


Blackberry varieties bear fruit on their *second-year* canes. Our problem here is that our winters are so cold the canes could never live to the second year.

Researchers at the University of Arkansas have released two varieties that bear fruit on their *first-year* canes: 'Prime Jan' and 'Prime Jim'.

Between these two varieties, 'Prime Jan' produces a slightly sweeter berry. 'Prime Jim' is known for its vigorous, more erect canes. These varieties are hardy to Zone 4. Preliminary studies in our state indicate these blackberries may be particularly well suited to production in high tunnels and other protective shelters.

Blackberries are notorious for their thorns, and these Arkansas varieties are definitely thorny. But we don't have a choice—thornless varieties cannot grow here.

On the positive side, these varieties are very easy to manage. After frost, we simply mow the canes down to the ground. I would keep the canes standing until late March since the canes could stand over winter and collect snow to insulate the crowns.

New canes will emerge in spring and the berries will ripen from late June to frost. This sounds easy and is worth a try if you are a blackberry lover. 



## NDSU Extension Service

Written by Tom Kalb,  
Extension Horticulturist, NDSU  
tom.kalb@ndsu.edu

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