

Notes on Blackberries in Kentucky

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A small variety planting of blackberries made in western Kentucky in the spring of 1939 has furnished some results that might be of general interest to berry growers. This planting is located about 75 miles east of where the Ohio River joins the Mississippi, on the grounds of the Western Kentucky Experiment Substation, Princeton, Kentucky. The planting is on low ground that is subject to temperatures somewhat more severe than are general throughout the section. The following table gives some of the characteristics of the varieties as shown in this planting, to date:

Variety	Winter Resistance	Orange Rust Resist.	Productivity
Eldorado	Hardy	Medium	High
Alfred	Hardy	Low	High
Early Harvest	Hardy	Medium	High
Ozark Beauty	Half Hardy	High	Moderate
Brainerd	Half Hardy	High	High
Young	Tender	High	Moderate
Boysen	Tender	High	Moderate

Hardiness

In January, 1940 and again in January, 1942 this planting experienced temperatures of between 10° and 20° below zero and on these occasions all of the canes of the varieties listed as tender or half hardy were killed to the ground with resultant total loss of crops. The varieties listed as hardy had some cane tip killing;

however, this did not materially effect their fruitfulness.

Boysen, Young, and Brainerd

The prostrate canes of the Boysen and Young varieties, often classed as dewberries, have also been winter killed when no sub-zero weather was experienced, even when having a straw mulch covering.

These varieties have produced a satisfactory harvest only during the spring of 1941 and cannot be considered as reliable in this section for either home or commercial production. The Brainerd seems more hardy than the Boysen or Young varieties but has frequently lost so much of its fruiting wood from winter injury that it cannot be depended upon here. Where this variety comes through the winter, it produces large quantities of late berries over a long period that develop good to large size and good quality, if allowed to remain on the vine until fully ripe.

Early Harvest and Alfred

The Early Harvest has been very satisfactory except for its small sized fruit which is a characteristic of the variety. This variety contained one plant that regularly produced fruit twice the size of the others and otherwise typical of the variety. However, this plant was one of the very few of this variety to take orange rust. As for productiveness, quality and fruit size, the Alfred has been the most outstanding but the serious plant losses from orange rust have virtually eliminated this variety from the planting.

Ozark Beauty, a variety of some consequence in Arkansas and the upper south has had no orange rust but has suffered from winter injury and is not exceedingly fruitful, though of high quality.

Eldorado

The Eldorado plants were secured from a well-known nursery and were, of course, supposedly true to name. The lot, however, contained a considerable number of unfruitful plants. At the first harvest these plants were marked with stakes. Each year, since that time, the same individuals have failed to produce normal fruit. All berries on these plants are abortive and contain only 2 to 10 drupelets. Such plants are worthless and, should they occur in commercial plantings, would seriously curtail production. It has been suggested that these might be affected with a fungus disease that interferes with pollination. If this is the case, the disease had not spread either to regular Eldorado plants alongside or to any of the other varieties. Similar samples of berries have been sent in from other El-

dorado plantings in Kentucky and reports have been received of commercial plantings that contained a high percentage of plants behaving in this manner. A few plants of this unproductive type were sent to Dr. A. S. Colby for study at the University of Illinois at Urbana, Ill. Two fruiting seasons have now gone by and at that location this berry is totally barren, setting no drupelets. This would indicate the condition became more serious further north; for ample opportunity for cross-pollination, if needed, existed in each planting. Normally, the Eldorado is an excellent variety over a wide territory and those selling or distributing plants of this or any other fruit should *know* that they have only fruitful plants rather than a very undesirable mixture.

The rust rating of Eldorado in the table is subject to the following question. This variety is normally highly resistant to rust and, due to the close proximity of the plants and the intermingling of roots and sprouts, it has not been determined whether all of the rust is in the Eldorado or the unfruitful mixture.

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