

Blackberry

Rubus fruticosus



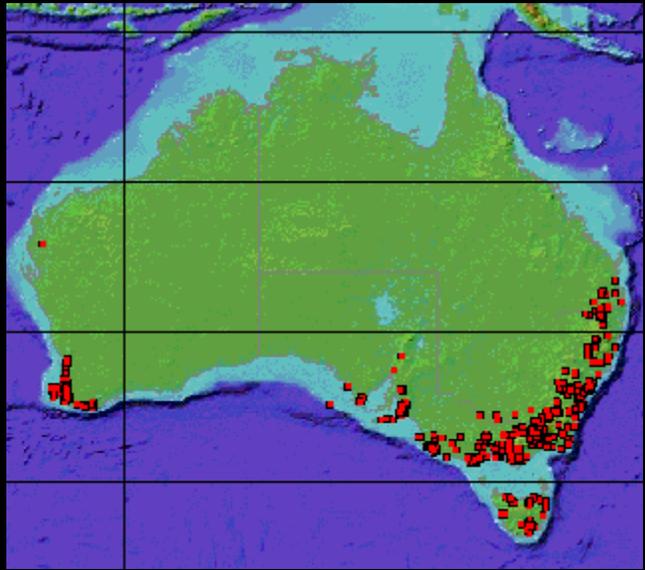
EDUCATE

DESIGN

CONSULT



Photo Courtesy of Gardensonline



Courtesy of Australian virtual herbarium

Description: Blackberry is a semi deciduous, perennial shrub with scrambling, arching, prickly stems (canes) that may form dense, tangled thickets to 4 m high. The stems take root where they touch the ground, often forming dense thickets. The broad leaves are 3-15 cm long and divided into 3-5 toothed leaflets.

As A Soil Indicator: Very low Calcium, Low Potassium, High phosphate, High Magnesium, High Manganese, High Iron, Very little organic matter. More abundant on fertile soils

Life cycle: Perennial. Flowers November to January. Fruits January to April. Seeds germinate from spring to autumn and grow very slowly in the first year usually reaching 50-70 mm height with 3-6 leaves but have a disproportionately large root system. After 3 or 4 years, they develop into a shrub about 1000 mm round. In winter they loose most of their leaves and grow very slowly. In spring and summer they produce new leaves and canes quickly. First year canes emerge, in late winter, from the central crown that may be up to 200 mm round. The first year canes grow very quickly at 50-80 mm per day.

Beneficial: Blackberries are picked for food, preserves, jam, pies, wine, liqueurs. Leaves are used as a tea substitute. Canes are used for securing thatch. Fruit is rich in vitamin C. Pollen and honey are produced from it. It has been used as a hedge plant and for controlling stream bank erosion. Provide a refuge from feral cats for native birds. Used in herbal medicine for coughs, diarrhoea and blood cleansing..

Detrimental: Invades pasture land and blocks creeks and rivers. Reduces access to amenity areas and streams. Form impenetrable thickets that harbours vermin such as foxes and rabbits. Old infestations can be a serious fire hazard due to the large number of old dead canes. Sheep can become entangled in the canes and die. Very few companion plants survive in the thickets. It delays or prevents regeneration of forests after thinning or cutting.