

Blackberries

History

Eastern North America and Europe are the two great centers of wild blackberries. Because of heavy forests, blackberries were not abundant when North America was settled. However, as land was cleared, wild blackberries spread. Cultivation of the blackberry began around 1825. In the 1940s and 1950s, there were 3,000 acres of blackberries in Arkansas. Currently there are about 300 acres in the state. Dewberries, the trailing, ground-running kind of blackberries, were discovered in West Virginia and transplanted to Ohio in 1875. Today they can be found growing wild in some areas of Arkansas.

Buying & Storage Tips

- Select berries that are uniformly black, firm and plump. Stains in paperboard containers are evidence of crushed berries.
- Arkansas blackberries are available from late May through July.
- Since blackberries turn black before they are fully ripe, take care to choose only firm, fully ripe fruit. Berries from wild and thorny cultivated types should be glossy black, while berries from cultivated thornless types should be a dull black.
- Sort blackberries to remove very soft berries, leaves or stems and insects. Soft or damp berries should be used as soon as possible.
- Blackberries should not be washed until just before being used. If your berries are damp, gently dry them on paper towels.
- Store blackberries uncovered in a shallow container in the refrigerator for one to two days.

Preparation Tips

- Wash blackberries by lifting gently from the water. Remove any stems, drain and dry by placing in a single layer on paper towels.
- Puree blackberries with fruit juices and/or other fruits and freeze to make popsicles. Yogurt can be added to the mixture before freezing for extra flavor and nutrition.
- Cultivated, thornless blackberries do not always “juice” when they are baked in pies and cobblers. To form a successful filling, crush about a third of the berries and gently mix with the whole berries and other filling ingredients before being poured into the pie shell or cobbler pan.
- Orange, lemon, cinnamon and nutmeg flavors blend well with blackberry flavors.

Nutrition Information

Blackberries are rich in vitamin C, fiber, antioxidants and other phytochemicals that may help prevent cancer and heart disease.

1 cup blackberries, unsweetened

Calories: 75

Carbohydrate: 18 g

Potassium: 282 mg

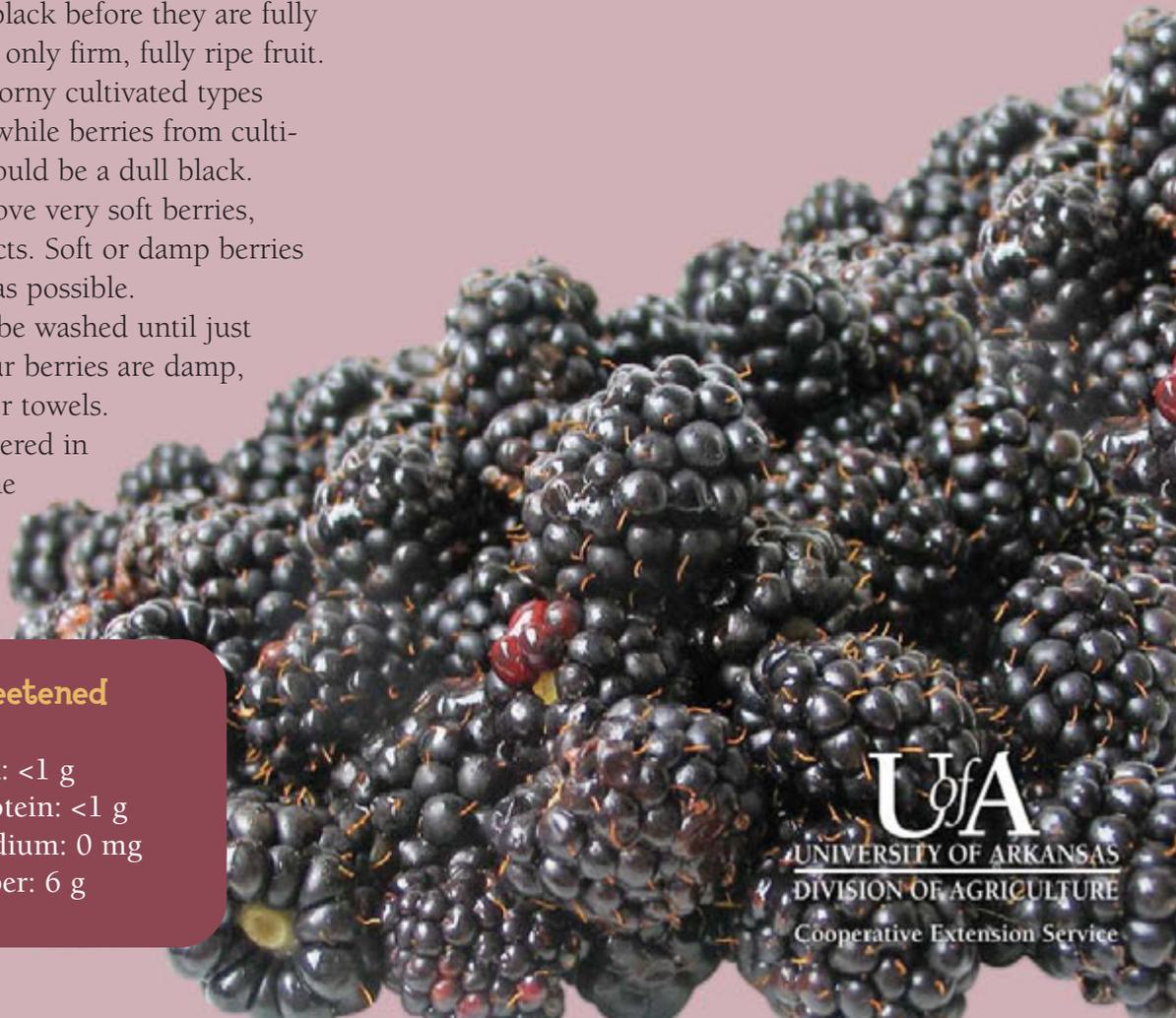
Vitamin C: 30 mg

Fat: <1 g

Protein: <1 g

Sodium: 0 mg

Fiber: 6 g



Blackberries are low in calories and fat and high in fiber. Although the actual amount of nutrients may seem small, their contribution is significant if two or more servings of fruits are eaten daily.

Recipes

Tart and Tangy Blackberry Lemon Dessert

1 package (3-ounce) lemon gelatin
1 cup boiling water
1 cup plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt
2 cups fresh blackberries

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Cool slightly. Stir in yogurt. Refrigerate until partially set. Gently fold in blackberries. Pour into a serving container or individual serving dishes. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm. Makes 4 servings.

Calories: 150
Carbohydrate: 30 g
Protein: 6 g
Fat: 1 g
Fiber: 4 g
Cholesterol: 4 mg
Sodium: 143 mg

Blackberry Pudding

1 cup graham cracker crumbs
2 tablespoons sugar, or to taste
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon margarine or butter
3 cups blackberries, fresh or frozen

Combine graham cracker crumbs, sugar and cinnamon. Blend crumb mixture and margarine together with a fork until fine. Layer 1 cup of berries in an 8-inch square baking dish. Cover with 1/2 cup of crumb mixture. Repeat layers. Bake at 350° F for 30 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Calories: 185
Carbohydrate: 33 g
Protein: 3 g
Fat: 5.5 g
Fiber: 6 g
Cholesterol: 3 mg
Sodium: 160 mg

Blackberry Preserves

2 pounds blackberries (about 6 cups)
2 cups berry juice
4 1/2 cups sugar

Wash and carefully pick berries, being careful to use only large, firm, uniformly ripened berries. Crush the soft or broken berries, heat and strain to obtain the berry juice for the syrup. Mix sugar and berry juice, bring to boil and add berries slowly. Cook until berries are clear and plump. Remove berries to trays and continue to cook syrup until desired consistency is reached. Pour syrup over berries and let stand covered until cold. Pack cold in sterilized jars, seal and process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath. Makes about 4 half-pint jars.

Serving Size = 1 tablespoon
Calories: 63
Carbohydrate: 16 g
Protein: 0 g
Fat: 0 g
Fiber: 1 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Sodium: 0 mg

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