

Autumn Fruit

Blackberry or Bramble

Rubus fruticosus

Dris

The bramble is a very familiar shrub that invades many gardens. Its succulent fruits are a sweet treat in late summer and are used in desserts, jams, seedless jellies and sometimes wine. There are hundreds of microspecies of this perennial shrub in Ireland and Britain. Its long, thorny stems grow at a fast daily rate, clambering over walls and across fields. It roots from the tip when it touches the ground, thus making it a really troublesome weed in woods and waste ground. It is however, an important food for many animals. Many thornless varieties have been developed for domestic growth. Blackberry blossoms produce good nectar for bees and large areas of wild blackberries will yield a medium to dark, fruity honey.

Flower Colour: White or pink

Height: Mostly trailing but can reach from 1m - 4m.

Leaves: Oval and coarsely toothed - pale underneath.

Flowering season: June - September

Habitat: Hedges, stone walls, abandoned fields, woods and on heathland.



Above: The flowers of the blackberry. *Below:* The succulent blackberry fruits.



Photos: Robbie Murphy

Blackberry & Apple Pie

- 1 lb blackberries
 - 2 cooking apples, peeled and sliced
 - 8 oz plain flour
 - 5 oz margarine or butter
 - 2 oz sugar
 - 1 egg
 - pinch salt
1. Sieve the flour and salt.
 2. Rub in the margarine or butter until it resembles breadcrumbs.
 3. Add the sugar.
 4. Beat the egg and gradually add to the mixture, forming into a paste.

5. Refrigerate before using.
6. Roll out half the pastry and place on a greased plate (suitable for oven use).
7. Place the apples and blackberries on the plate and sprinkle with a generous amount of sugar.
8. Moisten the edges of the pastry on the plate, roll out the remaining pastry and place on top.
9. Trim the edges and seal by firmly pressing down with the back of a floured fork.
10. Brush with milk and pierce the top three or four times to allow steam to be released during cooking.
11. Place in an oven, preheated to 200°C/Gas 6 for approximately 40 minutes.
12. Allow to cool a little before eating. Serves 6

