

Boysenberry

Rubus ursinus x idaeus (Rosaceae)

Fast Facts: Acres in Washington: less than 150
Number of Growers: less than 10
Per Acre Values: \$5,000

Description Of Crop:

A boysenberry is a glossy, large and juicy berry that is related to the North American blackberry. It is thought to be a cross between a red raspberry or loganberry and the Pacific blackberry. It has a woody stem with prickles like a rose and has a large fruit that is a deep maroon color. Popular cultivars come in thornless as well as thorny varieties. The fruit is an aggregate fruit of numerous drupelets. A drupe is a fruit in which the fleshy outer part surrounds a shell with a seed inside. It is classified as a blackberry because it keeps its core intact rather than having the drupelets separate from the core, leaving a hollow fruit as with the raspberry.

Boysenberries are eaten fresh during their short harvest season and are also incorporated into jams, pies, preserves, syrups and even wine. It has a taste similar to a raspberry with a tart undertone. Boysenberries have a short self life so it is important to eat them within two to three days of purchase. Boysenberries should be planted 3 feet apart in the late spring. Trellises are needed to keep the trailing vines off the ground and make harvesting them easier. Typically the vines will bear fruit between early July and early August, after which the vines should be cut close to the ground to encourage fresh shoots.

In the late 1920's George Darrow of the USDA and Walter Knott, a California berry farmer found some plants on the farm of Rudolph Boysen. They nursed the neglected plants back to health which eventually bore fruit. Walter Knott became the first person to commercially cultivate this plant and called the berries Boysenberries. They were initially only sold at Knott's Berry Farm in California.

In Washington, boysenberries are produced for fresh, local markets.

Key Pests:

The main pests in boysenberry production are diseases. These include: crown and cane gall, downy mildew, powdery mildew, botrytis, stamen blight and the raspberry bushy dwarf virus. Insects are another pest that affects boysenberries. The main pests are; the European earwig, the orange tortrix leafroller, the dryberry mite and the twospotted spider mite. Weed infestations can become troublesome if a cover crop is not maintained. Perennials weeds such as thistle and quackgrass and annual weeds such as groundsel, pigweeds, and chickweed all can easily reach high populations if not treated. Birds are an ongoing problem in boysenberry production and generally include robins and starlings.

Key**Pesticides:**

Crown and cane gall is controlled with Gallex. Downy mildew is controlled with Aliette. Powdery mildew is controlled with Armicarb 100. Botrytis and stamen blight are controlled with Captan. There is no cure for the raspberry bushy dwarf virus. The European earwigs, the dryberry mite and the twospotted spider mite are controlled with Brigade or Capture. The orange tortrix leafroller is controlled with Asana and predatory insects. Available herbicides effective against most weeds are Roundup, and Simazin. Birds can be controlled with netting if practical, noisemakers and visual scares i.e. hanging owls and snakes.

**Critical Pest
Control****Issues:**

Growers should plant certified nursery stock or tissue culture plants when possible. Growers need to take care not to injure plants when planting to avoid possible infection sites. Any infected plants need to be removed and destroyed. Growers should also avoid susceptible varieties when choosing plants.

Expert contact:

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**Location Of
Production:**

Chelan, Clark, King, Lewis San Juan, Skagit, Stevens, and
Whatcom counties.



Boysenberry

Boysenberry Production in Washington State



■ Area of Boysenberry Production



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