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IN THE LANDSCAPE:



Try Your Hand at Blackberries -

Blackberries (*Rubus* spp.) are brambles, like raspberries, and require similar pruning. Although you may associate brambles with thorns, there are both thorny and thornless varieties of blackberry. The vines' growth can be described as erect, semi-erect or trailing. For this reason, proper pruning requires an understanding of how they grow as well as the blackberry's fruiting habits. All blackberries have perennial roots and crowns, so they will continue to grow for many years, but the canes are biennial, which means they have a two-year life cycle.

Blackberry Cane Life Cycle:

Blackberry canes have primocanes and floricanes. Primocanes are vigorously growing vegetative shoots that appear in the first year and initiate fruit and bud development in later summer to early fall. Floricanes are the second-year canes that produce fruit; they bloom, set fruit and die after harvest. Floricanes were primocanes the previous year. Both primocanes and floricanes can exist simultaneously on a mature blackberry. Some varieties produce blackberries on primocanes. How to tell the difference? You may see a bit

IN THE LAWN:



It's a mole... No! It's a VOLE!

Freezing nights and shortening daylight in the fall tranquilizes the landscape — not counting the insatiable meadow vole that remains active throughout the year. The vole, also called a meadow mouse, is a ground dwelling rodent with a chunky grayish brown appearance, tiny ears and short tail. Commencing in late fall and continuing through winter into early spring, voles cause a variety of damage to landscapes. Runways and seemingly endless tunnels in lawns, shaved tree bark and roots, and the mysterious disappearance of flowering bulbs and tubers in spring are classic blueprints of vole damage. Under snow cover, voles can venture safely to any part of the landscape, and quite often homeowners do not notice the damage until the spring melt.

Ponds, stream banks, orchards, old fields, fence rows, pastures, hay fields, grassy weeds and ground covers are ideal habitats for voles. Backyard logs, undisturbed compost piles, tall ornamental grasses, bushy evergreen shrubs and debris in the urban landscape can also provide a nesting place for voles. Trapping or any other control strategies when the snow is on the ground has proven

of new growth on a primocane's tip, while a floricanes will sport blossoms in the spring.

Summer Pruning:

Early in summer, before flowers buds form, cut the tips off the primocanes when they reach about 3 feet tall. Removing the tips can greatly increase the fruit yield because it encourages heavy bud development and side branch growth. Cutting back the tips also creates firmer canes that are better able to support the weight of fruit and leaves. After harvest, cut any spent fruiting canes to the ground. When you remove the canes, take them out of the garden and destroy them.

Early Spring and Winter Pruning:

In winter or early spring, prune primocanes by removing damaged, diseased or crowded canes, leaving four to six healthy canes for each plant. Also, at this time, prune back any lateral or side shoots down to 12 to 15 inches to encourage larger fruit. After harvest, all floricanes, those that have fruited, should be cut to the ground.

Why Prune Blackberries

Blackberries need pruning each year so they don't become unmanageable. Pruning helps maintain tangle-free blackberry bushes and keeps them confined to their space. Keeping blackberry well pruned also helps the plants send up new shoots, keeps plants healthy and creates stronger, more productive canes, which increases the fruit yield.

TIDBITS of THIS 'N THAT:



- The word "tarragon" originates from the Arabic word tarkhun, or "dragon", due to the serpentine appearance of the plant's roots.

ineffective.



Vole Management Tips:

- The landscape should be scouted in fall for voles. Sightings of fresh grass clippings, tunnels, droppings around large grasses, nests, and chewed fruits are telltale signs of their abundance in the landscape.
- Lawns should be mowed to 2.5 to 3 inches tall, and tall grasses and weeds cut to eliminate cover for voles.
- The depth of mulch around landscape trees and shrubs should be reduced to less than 3 inches. Mulching with crushed rocks or gravel around valuable landscape trees like Japanese maple can deter voles as well.
- Firewood should be stored properly and brush should be removed.
- Spills from bird feeders should be cleaned up.
- Young trees and shrubs should be protected with a one-quarter inch size mesh hardware cloth around the base. The hardware cloth should be buried 3 inches deep in the ground to prevent the voles from burrowing under. The cloth should extend 18 inches above the ground.
- Mouse-size traps baited with peanut butter, oatmeal or apple slices can be set along the runway tracks. Two traps back to back in the runway are more effective than a single trap.

Being vigilant and taking proactive steps in the fall is the key to controlling voles

LAWN APPLICATIONS:



- Many houseplants go dormant for most of the winter; do not fertilize them during this period. Resume feeding once new growth appears in late winter or early spring.



FRIENDLY REMINDER:

Payments are due on March 1st if you chose the pre-pay discount option for your Landscape Management Program. Any payments received after this date will no longer be eligible for the reduced rate for service.

Looking forward to a GREAT 2019!



- Frosted Flowers: With frayed-edge flowers that resemble frost on a windowpane, Crispa tulips put on a dazzling show. These novelty tulip cultivars feature long-lasting blooms that appear in a range of colors.

DEAR LANDSCAPE COACH...

Q: My lilac hasn't bloomed now in 3 years. The foliage seems ok, but no flowers. What am I doing wrong?

A: There could be a couple causes for lilacs not blooming, but generally it is because they were pruned too late in the season or improperly. Lilacs set their buds soon after they are done flowering in the spring for next year already, so you want to get them pruned within a week or two tops to ensure you aren't cutting them off. In addition, lilacs perform best on new and young growth, so doing a renewal pruning every year where you are taking about 1/3 of the oldest stems out of the plant down to the ground will help ensure no stems are more than 2-3 years old. Other potential reasons for lilacs not blooming would be too much shade, poor soil drainage or scale (especially oystershell scale).

Have a question for The Landscape Coach?

Email it to maria@lowneyslandscaping.com

Get to Know Us - Featured Employee:



Steve Olson

Senior Turf Applicator

Steve has been working in the turf management field for over 25 years. Starting out his career as a groundskeeper, he quickly learned that he had a true passion for turf and worked his way up and became the Chemical Specialist & Qualifying Party (an advanced license) for the city of Kingman, AZ.

Eventually Steve made the decision to move back to the Fox Valley to help with a family business for a while and has been in the area for the past 7 years. He has a vast knowledge of everything turf and carries the following licenses and certificates: 1.2 – Fruit Crops, 3.0 – Turf & Landscape, 3.1 – Greenhouse & Nursery, 5.0 – Aquatic & Mosquito and 7.1 – Structural Pest Control.

You may say that Steve has an obsession with green - - - he doesn't just love making lawns green, he also lives and breathes green and gold. Steve enjoys coaching his son's sports teams and has officiated for 5 baseball/softball national championships and 7 state championships.

Construction Work Zone:



Plan NOW for the Upcoming Season:

Do you have a project that you need completed this year? New landscaping? New patio? A pergola? A firepit? Now is the time to contact one of our designers/sales consultants to put your ideas down on paper and get a plan together! That way when the weather warms up you are ready to go. Don't wait too long, we are already booking projects!

Call to schedule an appointment TODAY

920.733.2560

Connect with us

