



# BLACKBERRY AND RASPBERRY TALKING POINTS

## 2. A Berry of History about the Blackberry and Raspberry

- Blackberries are native to England. When colonists moved from England to North America the seeds were brought over too.
- Even though blackberries have been enjoyed by people for many years, it was not a commercial crop until the 1920s when a thornless blackberry plant was found. This plant made picking the blackberries easy enough that the berries could be sold for profit.
- Red raspberries are native to England as well, this red fruit has been grown on farms for more than 400 years.
- The wild red raspberry is native to North America.
- Raspberries grow well in cool summer and mild winter conditions. In the US Washington state has the best growing conditions and leads the US in raspberry production.
- In 1867 there were 40 varieties of raspberries now more than 200 varieties are known.

## 3. How do Blackberries and Raspberries Grow?

- Raspberries and blackberries are perennial fruit-bearing brambles with biennial canes. The plants produce canes ("suckers") from buds on the crown and on underground lateral stems. These canes grow during the first season and produce fruit during

the summer of the second year, while new canes emerge to provide a crop for the next year. Second-year canes die shortly after fruiting. First-year canes have green stems, while second-year canes have a thin, brown bark covering them.

## 4. What season do we pick Blackberries and Raspberries?

- In California, blackberries and raspberries are in peak season in late spring and summer. Frozen berries are available year round. Visit a local farmers' market to ask about the berry season in your area.
- Try these other rich sources of phytochemicals: beets, cherries, plums, red or purple cabbage, red or purple grapes, and whole grains.
- Blackberries and raspberries are members of the rose family. They are called *aggregate fruits* because each berry is a cluster of tiny fruits called *drupelets*. Each drupelet has a seed. Raspberries have a hollow center when picked since the receptacle remains on the cane. Blackberry drupelets remain centered around the core even after the berry is picked. When we eat a blackberry fruit, we consume the receptacle of the inflorescence (or cluster) called a *torus*.

## 5. Why should we eat Blackberries and Raspberries?

- Berries are high in proanthocyanins the bioflavonoid pigments that protect our cardiovascular systems

from destruction by reactive oxygen species (ROS)(antioxidants).

- Berries are not only delicious; they are the fountain of youth as they prevent heart disease and protect us from inflammation!
- From a botanical standpoint, berries naturally have to be full of antioxidants because otherwise they would not be able to protect themselves from the sun. The leaves of the plant use the sun to create energy, but the delicate berries of the plants would be destroyed by the sun if it weren't for the dark antioxidant pigments that are protective of its harmful rays.

### **Why should we eat a variety of berries each week?**

- Berries such as blueberries, cranberries, strawberries and raspberries are rich in disease-fighting phytochemicals that prevent and even reverse serious diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stomach ulcers and even help lower cholesterol levels. The key is to be eating these berries in their raw, whole fruit form rather than trying to eat processed berries or drink fruit drinks made from berries. In order to get the healing phytonutrients, you must get the berries in the freshest form possible -- that means no processed berries, just raw berries, right off the bush or straight from the grocery store.

What is so interesting about these berries is why are they such powerful disease fighters. Berries contain a variety of phytochemicals and antioxidants -- many of these are what give the plants their color but they also add a sense of flavor to the berries. These phytonutrients are extremely powerful compounds for

supporting optimum human health; in fact they are far more powerful than any pharmaceutical in terms of providing healthy benefits without dangerous side effects.

- Compared to other fruit sources, berries offer the highest content of antioxidants and phytochemicals for fighting disease. Berries are also rich in many vitamins and minerals, including calcium, magnesium and zinc -- minerals that are frequently deficient in the diets of most Americans

### **Healthy Serving Ideas**

- Add berries to your cereal for added fiber and flavor.
- Mash berries to make your own jam.
- Top pancakes with fresh blueberries or blackberries.
- Stir your favorite berries into low-fat yogurt for a tasty snack.
- Toss raspberries into a spinach salad.
- Keep a bag of mixed berries in the freezer for smoothies.

### **What can be made from berries?**

- Jams and jellies
- Chocolates that are flavored with berries
- Flavored waters and other drinks such as teas and coffees
- Syrups and sauces

### **How Much Do I Need?**

- A½ cup of berries is about one cupped handful.
- A½ cup of most berries (blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries) is a good source of vitamin C and fiber.
- Berries are rich in phytochemicals, which come from plants and may help you stay healthy.

## 6. How do you pick a good Blackberry or Raspberry?

- Choose fresh raspberries that are bright and evenly colored. Refrigerate for up to three days.
- Select fresh blackberries that are dry and shiny, without any green or red colors. Refrigerate for up to three days.
- Wash berries just before serving.

### Just the Facts

- The tayberry, loganberry, and boysenberry are hybrids of blackberries and raspberries.
- The boysenberry, a type of trailing blackberry, was cultivated in California by horticulturist Rudolph Boysen. Walter Knott began selling it at his roadside fruit stand in the mid-1930s.
- There are four colors of raspberries: gold, black, purple, and red.