

DEWBERRY



Rubus caesius
[ROO-bus KESS-ee-us]

Family: Rosaceae

Names: Dauwbraam, European Dewberry; Preas nan Gorm-dhearc (Scottish); mûre de la haie (French), Ackerbeere, Kratzbeere (German), mora di rovo (Italian), zarzamora (Spanish), amora (Portuguese), korbær (Danish), Blåbringebær (Norwegian), Blåhallon, psalmbär, salmbär (Swedish), sinivatukka (Finnish), yezhevika (Russian), jezyna popielica (Polish), hamvas szeder (Hungarian);

Description: This is a deciduous shrub of Europe, Orient and northern Asia growing to 0.2m by 1m . The fruit is small with few grains but these are large, juicy, black, with a fine, glaucous bloom and are very agreeably acid. The berry itself looks very like a blackberry, but you rarely find them with as many drupelets (the individual berries) as you

get on blackberries. The main difference in the berry is that it's somewhat powdery in appearance, having the same mustiness as you get on a grape or a plum. It is hardy to zone 5. The flowers which appear in June and July are white, or pale rose-colored. Seeds ripen from July to September. The flowers are hermaphrodite and are pollinated by bees, flies, beetles and apomictic (reproduce by seeds formed without sexual fusion).

Cultivation: Easily grown in a good well-drained loamy soil in sun or semi-shade. Succeeds on chalky soils. This species is a blackberry with biennial stems, it produces a number of new stems each year from the perennial rootstock, these stems fruit in their second year and then die. Plants in this genus are notably susceptible to honey fungus. The seed requires stratification and is best sown in early autumn in a cold frame. Stored seed requires one month stratification at about 37°F and is best sown as early as possible in the year. Prick out the seedlings when they are large enough to handle and grow on in a cold frame. Plant them out into their permanent positions in late spring of the following year. Cuttings of half-ripe wood, July/August in a frame. Tip layering in July. Plant out in autumn. Division in early spring or just before leaf-fall in the autumn.

Medicinal Uses: The fruit is commonly used for a treatment for diarrhea and dysentery. Combination of the roots is treatment for coughs and also fevers.

Other Uses: A purple to dull blue dye is obtained from the fruit.

Culinary Uses: Some people recommend cutting the berry on the stem and freezing it, to

be used like a cherry in a drink. The dewberry has a delicious flavor and is considered to be superior to blackcurrants though the fruit is rather small and consists of just a few drupes. The fruit can be used for jellies, cold drinks, tea, and also salads. The fresh or dried leaves are used as a tea substitute.

Recipes:

Dewberry Cobbler

4 Cups Fresh Dewberries
1 Cup Sugar
1 Tablespoon Cornstarch
1 Teaspoon Lemon Juice
1 Cup Flour
2 Teaspoons Baking Powder
1 Teaspoons Salt
1 Cup Milk
1 Cup Butter
1 Egg

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Spread dewberries in ungreased 2-qt casserole. Reserve 1 teaspoon of sugar. Mix remaining sugar, cornstarch, and lemon juice. Drizzle cornstarch mixture over dewberries: stir gently. Mix flour, baking powder, and salt in medium bowl. Stir in milk, margarine and egg. Spread batter evenly over dewberries, sealing edge. Sprinkle with reserved sugar. Bake 30-35 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 10 minutes.

Dewberry Wine

5-6 lb. dewberries
2-1/2 lb. granulated sugar
1/2 tsp. pectic enzyme
1/2 tsp. acid blend
1 crushed Campden tablet
7 pts. water
wine yeast and nutrient

Pick fully ripe, best quality berries. Wash thoroughly and place in nylon sieve. Mash and squeeze out all the juice into a primary fermentation vessel. Tie sieve and place in primary fermentation vessel with all ingredients except yeast. Stir well to dissolve sugar, cover well, and set aside for 24 hours. Add yeast, cover, and set aside 5 days, stirring daily. Strain juice from sieve and siphon off sediments into secondary fermentation vessel of dark glass (or

wrap clear glass with brown paper), adding water to bring to shoulder, and fit airlock. Place in cool (60-65 degrees F.) dark place for three weeks. Rack, allow another two months to finish, then rack again and bottle in dark glass. Allow a year to mature to a nice semi-sec. Dewberry wine, like blackberry and beet wine, has a deep rich color, but the color bleaches rapidly in light. For that reason, the must should be fermented in dark glass or clear glass wrapped in heavy brown butcher paper. When bottled, age and store it in a dark place.

Dewberry Delight

Crust

1 1/4 cups flour
1 stick butter or margarine
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 cup chopped pecans

Filling:

1 quart dewberries
8 oz cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

Topping:

1 qt berries
1/2 cup water
1 cup sugar
1/3 cup flour

Mix crust ingredients and press into 13x9 inch pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 10-15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Mix filling ingredients. Pour over crust and bake at 325 degrees for 15 minutes.

For the topping, cook ingredients until thick and pour over filling. Chill overnight, top with Cool Whip.

Fresh Dewberry Cake

1 box Pillsbury white cake mix
1 regular size box of black raspberry Jello
4 eggs
1 c. milk (or berry juice)
1/2 c. Crisco oil
1/2 c. sugar
1 qt. fresh plump dewberries, cut up & well drained
1 c. flaked coconut

1 c. cut up (finely) pecans
1 regular size box confectioners' sugar, sifted
1 stick butter

Combine cake mix, jello, eggs, milk and crisco and blend or mix until only very small lumps are left. In another bowl have sugar, dewberries, coconut and pecans mixed well, but do not mash berries. Add one half of this mixture to that in the other bowl and mix. Set the other one half aside for the icing. Bake mixture in 3 (9") greased and floured layer pans for approximately 25 minutes at 325 degrees. An oblong pan can also be used. While the cake is in the oven combine the sugar and butter with the remaining one-half of the berries. Mix well. This is the filling and icing. Ice the cake while it is hot so that the icing will seep into the layers. This tends to take a while but is well worth the trouble.

Dewberry Jelly

1/2 gal. Dewberries
Enough water to cover.
5 cups sugar
Boil until berries are real soft. Out through a colander the juice will be thick. Measure 6 cups juice, 5 cups sugar and stir well. Let them to a good boil that cannot be stirred down. Cook until juice is thick. Test by putting a tablespoon of the syrup in a saucer. Let cool. If it congeals it is ready to put into jars. If it doesn't, cook longer and test it.

Fresh Dewberry Pie

1 egg
2/3 c. flour
1/3 c. milk
1 1/2 c. sugar
dewberries
Streusel Topping:
8 T. flour
2 T. butter, melted
8 T. sugar

Fill pie shell with dewberries. Mix pie ingredients together and pour over dewberries. Put the streusel topping on and bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees. Features/descriptions: Rounded stems, shiny leaves, leathery, evergreen, 5 fan-

compound, toothed leaflets, white flowers, and black fruit.

Dewberry Cobbler

Mix:

1 c. flour
1 c. sugar
3 tsp. baking powder
1 egg
3/4 c. milk

Melt in baking dish, 1½ sticks butter or margarine. Pour mixture into melted butter. Add 3 cups berries, 1/4 cup sugar. Pour over mixture and bake until brown at 350 degrees. Serve with your favorite topping.

References:

Nature's Wild Harvest, Eric Soothill & Michael J Thomas, Blandford, 1990; ISBN: 07137-2226-6
Plants for a Future Database



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