

Blackberry Wine

Brenda Thompson

Some of the most rewarding fruit wines I have made, sweet or dry, have been from blackberries. Whether the blackberries are picked from the wild or purchased from the grocery store, my experiences in making Blackberry Wine have all been positive.

Blackberries can be used to make:

- Light, fruity wines to be enjoyed chilled on a hot summer day while sitting in the shade.
- Delightful dry aperitif wines that can be served with hearty appetizers before dinner; or
- Deep, sweet ports to be sipped in front of a crackling fire in the cold of winter.

There are a few keys to success with this fruit.

- First, you must start with good, ripe, firm fruit.
- Second, you must not be stingy with the amount of fruit you use. Although many recipes call for three pounds of fruit per gallon of wine, this only applies if you want a light-bodied wine. For a full-bodied wine, use six pounds of fruit per gallon.
- A sure way to release all of the beautiful juice from the fruit is to wash it carefully and place it in the freezer for a few days. Freezing breaks down the cellular walls of the fruit, allowing the juices to easily be extracted.

Keep these hints in mind and remember, be patient. A year in a dark bottle away from light will greatly benefit your Blackberry Wine.

Blackberry Wine – Full-Bodied

One Gallon

- 6 lb. Blackberries
- 2.5 lb. Sugar (5 cups)
- ½ tsp. Pectic Enzyme
- ½ tsp. Acid Blend
- 1 tsp. Yeast Nutrient
- One Campden Tablet
- One Gallon of Water
- One Package of Yeast (I use Premier Cuvee or Lalvin RC212)

Sterilize all equipment. Put ½ gallon of water in a pan on the stove to boil. Stir 2 cups of the sugar into the water until well dissolved. When water begins to boil, remove from heat and set aside. Crush the fruit well and place it in a nylon fruit bag. Tie bag closed. Place juice and fruit in the primary fermentation vessel. Pour hot sugar water over the fruit bag. Add remaining water to approximately one gallon of liquid in primary fermentation vessel. Stir well. Check Specific Gravity. It should be around 1.084 to provide a wine of about 11% alcohol when fermented to dryness. If necessary or

desired, add the remaining sugar to increase the SG. Add Pectic Enzyme, Acid Blend and Yeast Nutrient. Crush the Campden Tablet and add to the liquid. Stir well. Cover with a cloth and set aside for 24 hours. After 24 hours, add Yeast. (Your Yeast will be working vigorously and will need oxygen at this stage. Do not deprive them of the necessary oxygen by closing off the fermentation vessel.)

Keep in primary fermentation and covered with a cloth for about five days (SG is around 1.040), punching down the fruit every day. After five days, drain the fruit bag (do not squeeze it) and rack the wine into the secondary fermentation vessel with an air lock. Rack at one month. Wine should be dry or near dry. Rack again at two months. At three months, rack wine again. If wine does not appear clear enough, wait an additional month and rack again. When wine appears satisfactorily clear, at racking add one campden tablet, sweeten to taste and stabilize with Sorbistat K. After two or three weeks (and ensuring that wine does not begin to re-ferment), bottle the wine. Let the wine bottles stand up for at least three days. After three days, lay bottles on their sides in a dark place for at least six months (light, sweet Blackberry wine can be drunk immediately).