

Bramble

Rubus fruticosus

Dris



Bramble refers to any rough, usually wild, tangled prickly shrub, specifically the blackberry bush, or any hybrid of similar appearance with thorny stems. It is a native shrub and is widespread throughout Ireland.

The flowers are produced in late spring and early summer, and are about 2–3 cm in diameter with five white or pale pink petals. The flowers attract nectar-feeding butterflies and hoverflies.

The black fruit is not a berry in the botanical sense of the word, botanically it is termed an aggregate fruit, composed of small drupelets.

Blackberry leaves are food for caterpillars, some grazing mammals, especially deer, they are very fond of the leaves. When mature, the berries are eaten and their seeds dispersed by several mammals, such as fox and badger, as well as by small birds. Harvesting the berries is a popular pastime and are used to make jams, jelly, pies and sometimes wine.

In folklore it is told that blackberries should not be picked after Old Michaelmas Day (11 October) as the devil (or a Púca) has made them unfit to eat, by stepping, spitting, or fouling on them. There is some value behind this legend as wetter and cooler weather often allows the fruit to become infected by various molds such as *Botryotinia* which give the fruit an unpleasant look and may be toxic.