

Growing Blackberries in Colder Climates

Brett Rhoads

Rhoads Farm Inc.

rhoadsfarms@yahoo.com

Rotating Cross Arm (RCA)

- Blackberries are grown on the RCA by Trellis Growing Systems (TGS)



Varieties Include:

- Ouachita
- Natchez
- Apache
- Triple Crown
- Osage





The berries will get covered in December with a 3 oz. row cover.



Since 2010 temperatures have hit between -18°F and -22°F



Mid March Canes are rotated to bud break position



After blooms emerge trellis then is rotated to harvest position

- ▶ Berries market during the time southern U.S. and Mexico are finished.
- ▶ Season runs between Mid July through Mid September





- ▶ Yields after the major ‘Polar Vortex’ have been around 9,000-10,000 lbs. /Ac.



- ▶ With the RCA trellis system there is more training labor required, which means we try to capture higher prices.

Marketing

Berries are packaged in 6oz and 12oz clamshells and marketed by Giumarra International Berry under the Nature's Partner Label.





Pros and Cons

Pros of RCA System

- ▶ Winter protection
- ▶ Consistent yields
- ▶ Better spray coverage (SWD)
- ▶ Increased harvest efficiency
- ▶ Fruit quality
- ▶ Less white drupelet
- ▶ Better air drainage for disease control

Cons of RCA System

- ▶ Training Labor

Questions and Comments