



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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Late, Great Blackberry Season Worth the Wait

NASHVILLE – If “blackberry winter” is a chilly spell in April, then the blackberry winter of 2013 lasted all April long. Tennessee’s wet, cool spring certainly gave blackberries plenty of water and time to grow.

Fortunately, summer’s sun and heat showed up just in time to bring out the sweetness in this year’s crop, and the state’s blackberry growers anticipate a banner year. Some Tennessee berry growers will just have to wait a little longer than others, though, depending on where they live.

West Tennessee crops generally beat East Tennessee to harvest by as much as two to three weeks in any year, so the series of cold snaps that served as spring in East Tennessee this year stalled the crop even further.

Cowen Farms in Gibson County, owned and operated by Charles and Amy Cowen, think they’ll have a great, if a little late, blackberry season, but for these West Tennessee farmers, a late start means mid-June.

“Our on-farm presentation is focused on making our customers feel like family,” Amy Cowen said. “We can’t wait to have people come out to enjoy our you-pick berries, plus our laying hens and goats.”

“Although we’ll keep plenty of fresh blackberries to purchase already picked in quarts and gallons, you’ll really enjoy walking the rows of thornless blackberry canes and selecting your own blackberries. And if you eat a few while you are picking, that’s okay with us! We just want you to enjoy the visit and the blackberries.”

Cowen Farms blackberries are also available at local farmers markets. The Cowens have established relationships with customers at the nearby Rutherford community market, and this year plan to expand their efforts to include the Jackson farmers market, as well.

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Far up in the northeast corner of Tennessee, spring always takes its own sweet time. Greene County farmer Phillip Ottinger says his berry crops were still blooming on the first of June. Buffalo Trail Orchard, located in the Cedar Creek community and adjacent to the Cherokee National Forest, offers pick your own and pre-picked black and red raspberries, and blackberries.

“Cooler temperatures this spring set the berries’ timetable back some,” says Ottinger, “but they should just be tasty as ever in July. We get lots of compliments on how big our blackberries are. We grow three different varieties: Natchez, Ouachita, and Triple Crown.” Buffalo Trail Orchard will also have sweet corn and other vegetables available throughout the summer.

Find local berry patches and farmers markets with local blackberries, blueberries and raspberries at www.PickTnProducts.org.

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