

# Picking Boysenberries

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Boysenberries bloom over about a month in the spring and the berries ripen over about the same period of time unless there is a sharp increase in temperatures, which will make the berries ripen quicker. The berries gradually change from green to pink, then red, deeper red, purple and then almost black. The berries have drupelets like a raspberry, but have a core similar to a blackberry. The berries are sweetest and most flavorful when completely ripe. If picked when they are a deep purple, they still have a good flavor and are a little more tart.



Ripening Boysenberries

Fully ripe boysenberries are very large, juicy and flavorful!!



Ripe Boysenberries are large, almost black, soft, and nearly fall off the vine

We pruned the fruiting canes last summer so they cascade from the top of the trellis down to the ground. We have a combination of fabric and mulch at the base of the plants to keep the berries from getting soiled. There are two drip irrigation lines at the base of the boysenberry canes since these plants have the potential to dry out. Because the plants are large and lush, we give them double the water when we irrigate. The extra water also helps fill the berries during fruiting.



Boysenberries ripening and some ready to pick

The berries should be picked in a low flat container so the berries are not “stacked” on top of each other more than 2 or 3 berries deep. This causes bruising and leakage. They do not have a long shelf life and should be eaten or preserved quickly while their quality is still high. Boysenberries are rarely seen in a supermarket because they do not ship or store well.



Fresh picked boysenberries

We have enjoyed our berries fresh with ice cream, made into jam, and made into pies. We have made both freezer jam and cooked jam using SURE-JELL fruit pectin. The jam and jelly recipes are in the SURE-JELL box. The pie we made was a Rhubarb/Boysenberry pie; exchanging one cup of rhubarb for one cup of boysenberries.



Rhubarb / Boysenberry Pie

We found that using a food processor to “crush” the berries worked very well. Since boysenberries have a core in the center of the berry, similar to a blackberry, it is slightly more complicated to crush the berries efficiently. The berries crush easily in the food processor in just a few moments.



Crush boysenberries for jam, jelly or juice with a food processor