

## **Prime-Ark® Freedom**

**Type** - Primocane-fruiting; thornless; erect.

**Date of Release** - 2013 plant patent to be applied for.

**Fruit Size** - Fruits of 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' are very large, with floricane fruits averaging 9 g in Arkansas and slightly less for primocane fruits. This is larger than even 'Natchez' berries in Arkansas. In California fruits weighed as much as 16 g for primocane fruits.

**Flavor/Sweetness** - Average soluble solids (a measurement of sweetness) of 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' was 10.4%, slightly lower than 'Prime-Ark® 45' (11.4%) and similar to 'Natchez'. Flavor ratings for 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' were the same as for 'Prime-Ark® 45', and higher than 'Natchez', but lower than 'Ouachita' and 'Osage'.

**Yield** - Floricane fruit yields have been comparable to 'Prime-Ark® 45', and can range near that of 'Osage' and 'Ouachita'. In Arkansas primocane fruit yields have been very low for all primocane-fruiting genotypes due to very high summer temperatures. In limited evaluations in coastal California trials, substantial promise for primocane crops appears for 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' as it looks comparable to 'Prime-Ark® 45' in very early trials.

**Maturity Date** - Floricane first harvest date is very early, up to 9-11 days earlier than the early ripening 'Natchez', and 16-18 days before 'Ouachita'. Primocane first ripe fruit date has been difficult to fully determine for 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' in Arkansas. Observations indicated that first ripe fruit was 18-20 of July on tipped primocanes at FRS although fruit amount was limited, and ripened earlier than an average date reported for 'Prime-Ark® 45' of 8 Aug. In California, 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' began harvest approximately 10-15 Aug. with harvest extending into early October, an earlier ripening date than 'Prime-Ark® 45' of late August to early September.

**Disease Resistance** - No orange rust observed and only slight anthracnose observed. No information available concerning resistance to double blossom/rosette.

**Comments** - 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' is the world's first primocane-fruiting and thornless commercial blackberry introduction. It is intended primarily as a home garden or local-market plant. It has very large fruits with good flavor, and is very early ripening on floricanes, the earliest of all Arkansas blackberry varieties. Fruit of 'Prime-Ark® Freedom' does not exhibit exceptional postharvest storage potential however, and is not recommended for the shipping market. It is very erect, similar to 'Ouachita' and more erect than 'Natchez.' In Arkansas it has been rated as having good but not excessive vigor while in California was observed to be very vigorous. The very early bloom dates could indicate lower chilling requirements, but this has not been confirmed due to the evaluation site in Arkansas being a high-chill location.

