The Best Berry...
Walter Harrill, Imladris Farm
Why Caneberries?

- Easy to grow/maintain
- Short planting to harvest window
- Short or long production season, your choice
- Easy to preserve
2 types of caneberries in WNC

Raspberries (red, black, and gold, wineberries)

Blackberries (also dewberries)

Technical difference - raspberries leave the thimble behind when you pick them
3 types of production systems

Summer bearing - traditional system, fruit on 2 year old canes

Everbearing - produces an early (fall) crop on first year canes, as well as the standard summer crop.

Fallbearing - Manipulating Everbearing varieties for maximum fall output
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Site Selection

Sun!
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Slightly acid pH (6.5-6.8). Get a soil test!

Good drainage is very important! If you can’t provide good drainage in your soil as it is, consider a raised bed.

Close/easy access for ease of picking.
Site Prep

Soil amendments are much harder once the plants are in place. Consider taking a year and cover cropping your bramble rows! If everything is successful, you won’t have an opportunity to do this again for 12-15 years.
Planting

Raspberries - plant in rows, 2” deep, 12-18” apart

Blackberries - plant to soil line on plant, 3-4’ apart

Row spacing dependent on mowing equipment
Planting, continued

Till ground beforehand to control weeds (unless cover cropped).

Biggest challenge for a new bramble planting is correct amount of moisture. 1-3 waterings per week, allowing roots to dry out in between, is correct.
Long Term Management
Raspberries

Do not mulch beyond the first year.

Fertilize yearly with manures, compost tea, etc. Liquid forms are better, in order to avoid burying the crown.
Raspberries

Trellis raspberries at approx. 18” and 40”.

Trellising is handy the first year, necessary the second.

Trellising can be as simple or fancy as you’d like.
Raspberry Pruning

3 systems:
Summerbearing canes fruit on 2 year old wood, so in the winter prune out all older canes that produced berries the previous summer.
Raspberry Pruning

Everbearing canes fruit in the first fall and the second summer, so discretion in pruning is more important.
Raspberry Pruning

Fallbearer’s are everbearing canes, but you mow them to the ground every winter. This sacrifices the summer crop but stimulates a larger fall crop.
Blackberries

Mulch occasionally (every 2-3 years) to help control weeds, retain moisture.

Vigorously control perennial weeds.

Fertilize yearly.
Blackberries

Trellis blackberries at 24-30” and 48”.

Trellising not necessary the first year, required the second.

Blackberry trellis needs to be very sturdy.
Blackberry Pruning

Pruning blackberries has a few complications:

- The plant is *very* vigorous, growing 6-12’ long, and therefore wasting a lot of energy producing biomass that will be pruned away.
- Woody material is very prone to stem blight if wounded/cut.
Blackberry Pruning

To manage these challenges, prune blackberries throughout the growing season (typically July-September) by pinching the tender young tips as each cane reaches the appropriate length. This triggers lateral growth, which can be controlled the same way. Since the young flexible tips are resistant to stem blight, this also controls disease.
Blackberry Pruning

Additionally, at the end of each growing season (promptness is important since next year's fruit buds are set in late August and early September), cut out all spent canes and finish any cleaning up that needs to be done.
Pruning

With all brambles, it is very important to remove potentially infectious material from the area to reduce risk of viral diseases.
Diseases and Pests

Viral diseases - best controlled through purchase of clean plants and careful elimination of dead/pruned material.

Japanese Beetles - control through traps
Diseases and Pests

Raspberry tip borer

Adult lays eggs between the girdles. Larva hatches out, tunnels down into the crown to develop. Easily controlled manually.
Diseases and Pests

Spotted Wing Drosophila - biggest problem in bramble production today. Most effective control is prompt harvesting and not letting fruit sit around.
Suppliers

Nourse Farms, Whately Massachusetts - www.noursefarms.com

http://www.jonesfarmsnc.com/
Thanks for your time!