

Evaluation of Growth characteristics and Yield Components of Wild Blackberry (*Rubus*L. Sub-genus *Rubus*Watson) Species

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Abstract

Blackberry (*Rubus*L. sub-genus *Rubus* Watson) fruits grow wild in Kenya; therefore, limited information is available regarding their growth characteristics and yield components under conventional production. Wild Blackberry (*Rubus*L. sub-genus *Rubus* Watson) species were evaluated for their growth characteristics and yield components. A trial on how wild blackberry perform was carried out, at the Horticulture Research and Teaching Field, Egerton University, Kenya. A randomised complete block design (RCBD) with five treatments (species) and three replications was used. There were four wild blackberry species *Rubusvolkensis*, *Rubussteunderi*, *Rubusapetalus* *Rubuspinnatus* and one cultivated cultivar *Rubusfruiticosus*, were collected and planted. Growth and yield components variable measured were cane height, cane diameter, number of canes per plant emerging from ground number of laterals per cane, lateral length internode length per canes number of flowers per lateral and cane, fruit number per laterals and canes, fruit size and fresh fruit. Analysis of the data showed that the wild species *Rubusapetalus* had the highest growth in terms of cane height cane diameter, numbers of laterals, canes emerging from the ground, internode length per cane lateral length number of flowers per lateral and cane and number of fruits per lateral and cane. while cultivated cultivar *Rubusfruiticosus* had the highest fruit size and weight. Wild blackberry species has the potential of being adapted and cultivated conventionally for commercial utilization in Kenya.