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The Blackberry

A Snohomish Legend



A long time ago, Blackberry was an upright tree which grew as tall as the other trees in the forest. It had long branches and sharp thorns. Blackberry had always lived at peace with the animals and was very popular.

For a reason known only to the Great Spirit, the attitude of Blackberry changed from friendly to hostile. Blackberry began to throw his long branches around any animal which came within his reach. He would then hold the poor animal with his thorns until it died. Blackberry grew taller and stronger as the ground became enriched with the bones of the animals he had trapped and killed.

The animals complained to Spelyi, the wolf, about the evil ways of Blackberry. Spelyi did not hesitate in responding to this problem. He grabbed a heavy club and climbed up a tall fir tree which grew near Blackberry. Spelyi then walked out on a limb and smashed Blackberry until every one of his branches had fallen to the ground. Since that day, Blackberry has been a bush rather than a tree.

That is why you will find the blackberry growing low to the ground, where it is so weak it can no longer harm animals by catching them in its branches and holding them with its thorns.

