



Blueberry Guide



Although not a major agricultural crop in our area, Blueberries can still be grown successfully. Use these tips to get the best harvest!

Planting & Prep

Blueberries are grown best in full to part sun and with acidic (pH 4.5-5.5) soil. Make sure the soil can be kept moist but well drained.

For our area, containers may be the best option to maintain acidity. Use our **Camellia, Azalea & Gardenia Planting Mix** for in ground or containerized plantings. **Peat moss** is also a good supplemental soil amendment to increase acidity.

At planting time we recommend **Garden Elements Sure Start**, our 'Baby Food' for plants as well as **Root Master B-1** for new root development and prevention of transplant shock. Always follow package directions and remember not to plant too shallow or too deep.



Varieties & Selection

Blueberry bushes range in size from dwarfs (under 2') to large hedge varieties (6' plus). There are three main types of blueberries: Highbush (Northern and Southern), Rabbiteye, and Hardy Half-High Hybrids.

Northern Highbush are the typical grocery store type and most ripen from late spring to late summer. Our selection is of mainly Highbush varieties. See the back of this sheet for more information on varieties.



We recommend buying early, mid and late bearing varieties for cross pollination and a longer harvest. Two plants should supply enough for one person but don't forget to protect them from birds with netting! Bare root season and spring offer our best availability.

Watering

As mentioned earlier, blueberry bushes grow best in well drained soil. For our hot, dry Mediterranean summers, we recommend keeping a close watch on the moisture level in the soil.

Blueberries have shallow, compact roots that may dry out faster than fruit trees/bushes whose roots go down deeper. Mulching will help keep the soil moist and roots cool, but always avoid keeping the roots soggy. A moisture meter will help you determine the frequency of watering.



Fertilizing

Regular feeding with an acidic fertilizer during the growing season can be done with **Garden Elements Camellia Azalea Fertilizer**. Blueberries are sensitive to over-fertilizing and nitrates. This organic fertilizer is an excellent blend for your bushes. Most plantings will need the soil amended with Camellia Azalea Planting Mix or Peat Moss over time to maintain soil pH acidity. *Continued on back* Rev. June 2011



Blueberries-Continued



Pruning

Blueberries tend to over bear resulting in a year of major harvest followed by a year of small harvest. Avoid this alternate cycling by pruning your blueberry bushes in the winter when you prune deciduous fruit trees.



Remove old wood with too many fruit buds and too few leaf buds. You can also prune to shape the plant, bringing down the height or to prevent sprawling as well as

weak, crossing or dead twigs, branches and stems.

Varieties

Note: Varieties may vary and are subject to availability. All varieties are Northern types except where noted. Adapted from Sunset Western Garden Book and L.E.Cooke.

Blueray-Midseason. Vigorous, tall. Small clusters of large, highly flavored, crisp berries. Attractive shrub that tolerates more heat than Bluecrop. Old favorite.

Bluecrop-Midseason. Erect, tall growth. Medium to large open clusters of large berries, attractive shrub. Considered the leading commercial variety. Good for baking, freezing, preserves or fresh.

Berkeley-Midseason. Tall, open, spreading growth. Open, loose clusters of Large, light blue berries. High dessert quality and for freezing. Most popular for home gardens. Prune to prevent overbearing.

Chandler-Midseason to late. Tall upright. Very large, sweet berries over a long season.

Jubilee-Southern Highbush. Early. Tall, upright. Medium to large berries with excellent flavor.

Misty-Southern Highbush. Very Early. Large-medium berries with excellent flavor. Bears heavily. One of the most attractive bushes.

O'Neal-Southern Highbush. Very early. Large, light blue, flavorful berries. Best flavor of the Southern Highbush type.

Ozarkblue- Southern x Northern Highbush. Late. Large, light blue with excellent flavor. Similar to Bluecrop in fruit and habit. Bears later than most Southern Highbush.

Rubel-Early to Late. Erect, tall growth. Small, firm, tart berries.

Reveille-Southern Highbush. Midseason. Crunchy texture, excellent flavor. Narrow and upright growth.

Sharpblue-Southern Highbush. Early to Midseason. Large, fast growing shrub. Large, light blue berries with sweet-tart flavor.

Sunshine Blue-Southern Highbush. Midseason. Compact, evergreen reaching only 3' high. Makes an attractive landscape plant. Large, light blue berries with tangy flavor. Self-fertile with very low chilling requirement. Tolerates a higher soil pH than most other blueberries.

Star- Southern Highbush. Very early. Slightly spreading growth habit. Slightly less vigorous than Sharpblue. Large to very large, sweet medium blue fruit.

Tophat-Midseason. Dwarf hybrid that stays under 1.5' and is good in pots. Small fruit with mild flavor. Also good for bonsai.