

# ***Blueberries***

Blueberries are excellent plants for the home gardener, providing not only delicious fruit, but plants that have outstanding ornamental value as well. Blueberries are easy to grow, require little care and are seldom bothered by pests. Fruiting occurs from July to October depending on the variety. In winter, the leaves as well as the bark of the young branches turn glowing shades of yellows & reds.



## **Planting Blueberries**

Plant blueberries in an area that receives full sun in a well drained, acidic soil that is high in organic matter. Dig a hole approximately 1 foot deeper than the root ball. Mix compost or peat moss into the soil. Plant the bush so the crown of the plant remains just above the soil. Water them well using a transplanting solution. Blueberries are shallow rooted so they need to be well watered to avoid heat stress and to produce the best fruit.

## **Pollination**

Blueberries are self fertile, however planting two different varieties increases the amount of fruit that each will produce. Most blueberries bloom at about the same time so any two varieties will pollinate each other.

## **Fertilizing**

In March apply a light application of fertilizer to promote new leaf growth. Fertilize again in May or June with a Fruit Tree and Berry Food to promote fruit development in the summer.

## **Pruning**

Pruning newly transplanted blueberries is not recommended. It is best to let them become established for about 3 years before any pruning is done. Once the plants become established the goal of pruning is to promote the growth of strong new wood. This facilitates good fruit production on 2-3 year old canes. Cut out and dead or broken canes and a few older and less productive canes each year. Severe pruning is not necessary. To keep plants fully productive, try to have no canes over 6 years old.

## Blueberry Varieties

### **Blue Crop** - matures mid season

A very popular variety with large, light blue, firm and flavourful fruit that sweetens when completely ripe. Plants are vigorous, consistently productive and drought resistant. The berries are resistant to cracking. Blue Crop is also prized for its beautiful red fall foliage.

### **Chandler** - matures mid to late season

Fruit the size of cherries, excellent flavour, long ripening season (6 weeks), very vigorous producer, has a bushy upright spreading form.

### **Dixi** - matures late season

Plant is productive, vigorous and open spreading. Berries are large and have a pronounced aromatic flavour. They are delicious in pies.

### **Duke** - matures early season

This is one of the earliest blueberries to ripen. Duke bears good crops of sweet, firm and tasty fruit. Duke is reliable and very productive, once established one plant can produce over 20 pounds of berries.

### **Elliot** - matures late season

Vigorous, upright plant that is consistently productive. Fruit is medium sized and slightly tart.

### **Hardy Blue** - matures mid season

Plants are erect, upright and quick to establish. Berries are medium sized and very sweet. They ripen about the same time as Blue Crop.

### **Northland** - matures early mid season

Plants are vigorous, spreading, cold hardy and very productive. Berries are medium sized and firm.

### **Pink Lemonade** - matures mid to late season

Year round interest with pink/white blooms, berries that turn bright pink when ripe

### **Rancocas** - matures early to mid season

Upright and very productive. Berries are small but are the perfect size for muffins and they have good flavour.

### **Reka** - matures early season

Plants are upright, fast growing and extremely productive. They tolerate wetter ground than other varieties. Berries are dark blue, medium sized and firm.

### **Tophat** - matures late season

Full size, flavourful fruit on a compact 1.5 foot by 1.5 foot bush. Good for container planting, no pollinator needed.

### **Toro** - matures mid season

Giant, sky blue fruit, stocky compact bushy habit, foliage turns bright red in the fall

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