

Blueberries

Planting & Growing Guide

Cultural Requirements Delicious, exceptionally nutritious, high in bioflavonoids. Gardeners in warmer climates can enjoy growing blueberries by choosing one of the Southern Highbush varieties. These require fewer chill hours than the Northern Highbush which require over 1000 hours. Consider climate suitability, ripening season and fruit size when selecting varieties and include at least two different varieties for cross-pollination and fruiting (any two varieties will do, regardless of ripening time). Grow in acidic, well-drained soil. Cottonseed meal is an excellent fertilizer for blueberries along with good quality compost. Mulching with acidic materials has proved beneficial for soils that are not ideal for blueberry growing. Fir sawdust or bark dust, applied at a depth of two to four inches, also eliminates most of the need for cultivation and conserves moisture. Blueberries' shallow, compact root system makes regular irrigation a necessity.

Heeling In When your Bare Root stock arrives, open the plastic bags immediately. It is best to plant right away, within a week of delivery. If you cannot plant right away, you may "heel in" the plants to protect them and keep them alive (but still dormant) until planting in the permanent spot. To heel in Bare Root plants outside, pick a location that is shielded from wind. Dig a trench about twice as deep as the roots are long, with one side of the trench sloping at a 45 degree angle. Place the plants, roots side down, so that the trunks/stems are supported by the sloping side. Cover the roots with soil or sand and gently tamp down to avoid air pockets. Periodically check the root area, keeping the soil moist.

To heel in Bare Root plants inside due to snow or frozen ground outside, you can store them in a cool place like a root cellar, basement, or garage. It's important choose a place where the temperature stays between 38 and 45 degrees F. This is important so the plants neither suffer frost damage, nor break dormancy. Place the roots in a container with soil or sand and be sure to keep the root area moist.

Planting Instructions Blueberries ultimately reach a height of six feet or more with a spread of four feet or more. Therefore, the rows should be at least eight feet apart with plants spaced no closer than six feet apart, unless a hedge is desired. The top of the root clump should be close to the surface if a mulch is used or about four inches deep without mulch.

Fertility For mineral soils that are well-balanced, a yearly application of a high acid organic fertilizer is ideal. It should be applied in early spring, on the surface of the mulch in a broad ring around the plant, regardless of plant size. The regular addition of phosphorus is important for fruit production. Periodic soil testing will show whether pH and nutrient needs are being met.

Fruit Production Two different varieties must be planted to insure cross-pollination and fruit set. Any two varieties will cross-pollinate regardless of ripening time. The early varieties begin ripening in June and the late varieties in early August. When planting two or three year old plants, the blossoms should be removed for a year or two to promote vegetative growth and development of a strong root system. Blueberries tend to over-bear rather than under-bear. Thinning blossoms will promote larger fruit and a healthier bush. A large plant may produce 15 to 20 pounds of fruit.

Pruning After the plant is established, you may remove old wood. Some of the thrifty vegetative wood may be removed to prevent the plant from becoming too sprawling or too high. Blueberries become sweeter the longer they remain on the bush. The only reason to pick early (as they turn color), is to prevent the birds from eating them first. Home gardeners often protect their plants from birds with netting or bird scare tape. See our Main Catalog or website for bird repellent supplies. For more information on pruning and training of berries, see *Fruits and Berries for the Home Garden*, by Lewis Hill.

Dormant Nursery Stock Limited Replacement Guarantee

We guarantee that our product(s) will arrive in good, viable condition. If your dormant bare-root stock (including potted fig and pomegranate), kiwi, grape, artichoke, asparagus, horseradish, rhubarb, or (straw/rasp/black/blue/boysen)berry does not leaf out, contact our Customer Service Department *on or before June 1st* and return the plant for inspection. We will issue you a credit for the price you paid for that plant (excluding freight) provided it does not show damage (rodent, mechanical, etc.) or root rot. This credit is redeemable toward the purchase of any other bare-root item of your choice the following year (Note: we reserve the right to not issue credit for replacement of already replaced items.) **This limited replacement guarantee does not apply to flower bulbs, citrus trees, potato seeds, olive trees, garlic, native plants, or conifer seedlings.**

Limitation of Remedy

We warrant to the extent of the purchase price only that the seeds or plants sold hereunder are as described on the label within recognized tolerances. No other warranty is given, expressed or implied, of (1) the merchantability or fitness of the seeds or plants for any particular purpose, or (2) against loss due to any cause. We cannot accept any responsibility for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions (soil preparation, fertilization, weed and pest control, temperature control, irrigation...etc.) that must be met to insure the success of your crop(s) or plants.

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