

# Starting Right with Blueberries

Blueberries are good for your health, lovely in the garden, and oh so tasty. Northern Highbush, Southern Highbush and Rabbiteye varieties (see reverse side for descriptions) all do well in our area with proper planting and care. Blueberries produce bigger crops and bigger berries when at least 2 cultivars are present for cross-pollination. (The northerners will cross-pollinate with the southerners.) Planting multiple varieties also ensures a longer harvest season. Plants bear best in mostly sun but will tolerate some shade in the hottest part of the afternoon. Avoid areas with reflected heat.

## 1. Soil Preparation

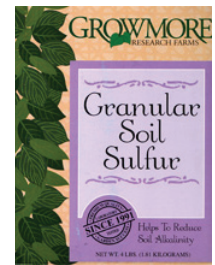
Blueberries thrive under conditions that suit Rhododendrons and Azaleas. They prefer an acidic pH between 4.0 – 5.0.

- Dig a hole 24" wide and as nearly deep as the pot is tall. Mix 1 part your native soil and 3 parts of *Gardner and Bloom Acid Planting Mix* to fill in the hole.
- Add 1 cup of *GROW MORE Granulated Soil Sulfur* (to lower the soil pH to 5.5 or below) PLUS 1 cup *Dr. Earth Rhododendron, Azalea, and Camellia Fertilizer* as a starter fertilizer (for 1 gal size plant or smaller) to the planting hole and mix thoroughly.
- Top dress with 1 cup *Dr. Earth Rhododendron, Azalea, and Camellia Fertilizer* after planting.



## 2. Mulching

Blueberries do best with a 2 – 4" layer of mulch (see suggestions below) over the roots to conserve moisture, maintain pH, prevent weeds and add organic matter. Mulch after planting leaving area around base of plant clear. Add fresh mulch every May.



## 3. Fertilization

Blueberries like acid fertilizers. Fertilize in early spring with *Dr. Earth Rhododendron, Azalea, and Camellia Fertilizer* and repeat every two months. Add a cup of *GROW MORE Granulated Soil Sulfur* to each plant in spring and again in fall.

## 3. Watering

Water deeply when soil is dry on surface and just barely moist about an inch below the mulch, generally once or twice a week.



## Check List

- Blueberry Plants (2 per family member)
- Gardner and Bloom Acid Planting Mix (2 bags for 3 plants)
- Mulch (2-4") Suggestions: Original Mulch Block, Shredded Bark or Gardner & Bloome Soil Building Compost
- Dr. Earth Rhododendron, Azalea, and Camellia Fertilizer (2 cups per plant)
- GROW MORE Granulated Soil Sulfur (1-2 cups per plant)

# 2008 Blueberries

Northern Highbush do best with winter chill but not excessive summer heat. Southern Highbush need little winter chill and tolerate high summer heat. Rabbiteyes need little chill and tolerate high heat. They also have thicker skinned berries, good for baking.

**Plant at least two cultivars for best berry production and at least two plants per person.**

## **Berkeley N. Highbush** *Midseason*

- Very large light blue fruit, very firm and flavorful
- Upright, vigorous, productive bush 4-6 feet tall
- Fruit resists cracking and dropping

## **Bluecrop N. Highbush** *Midseason*

- Considered to be the best all around variety for consistent yields
- Large high quality fruit with delicious flavor
- Upright, open growing habit bush 4 -6 feet tall
- Disease resistant

## **Centurion Rabbiteye** *Late*

- Med - large, good quality fruit, darker than most rabbiteyes
- Crunchy berries excellent for baking
- Upright growth 6 - 10 feet tall, easy to manage

## **Chandler N. Highbush** *Mid-Late*

- Fruit the size of cherries!
- Delicious fruit ripens over a 6 week period
- Vigorous spreading bush to 5-6 feet tall

## **Earliblue N. Highbush** *Very Early*

- First to ripen.
- Fruit is large, light blue, sweet and delicious.
- Upright bush 5-6 feet tall with bright red wood and large glossy foliage.

## **Jubilee S. Highbush** *Midseason*

- Easy to pick sky blue berries in large clusters
- Very heavy producer
- Bush upright 5 - 6 feet tall, tolerant of heavy soils

## **Legacy S. Highbush** *Midseason*

- Med-large light blue berries with robust flavor, rated highly in taste test.
- Very heavy producer
- Evergreen, to 6 feet tall, good in landscapes.



## **Misty S. Highbush** *Early*

- Large, firm sky blue berries with excellent flavor
- Second small harvest in the fall
- Outstanding landscape plant- hot pink blossoms, bushy habit 4 - 6 feet tall, evergreen foliage

## **Reveille S. Highbush** *Very Early*

- Medium size, light blue berries with almost crunchy texture and outstanding flavor
- Narrow, upright to 5 feet tall, good hedge plant

## **Sharpblue S. Highbush** *Early*

- Leading variety for low-chill areas
- Very large fruit with excellent flavor, a favorite at local taste tests
- Upright growth 5 to 6 feet tall

## **Southmoon S. Highbush** *Early*

- Large firm berry with good flavor
- Exceptionally heat tolerant bush, 5 - 6 feet tall
- Tolerates higher pH better than other blueberries

## **Sunshine Blue S. Highbush** *Late*

- Semi-dwarf evergreen features a highly branched growth habit to 3 feet tall and wide
- Showy hot pink blossoms yield large dime-sized good flavored berries with a unique tangy flavor for at least 9 weeks during the summer.
- Tolerates higher pH better than other blueberries

## **Top Hat Dwarf Hybrid** *Midseason*

- Pea-sized light blue berries
- Excellent border plant (1-2 ft tall and wide)
- Superior bonsai candidate