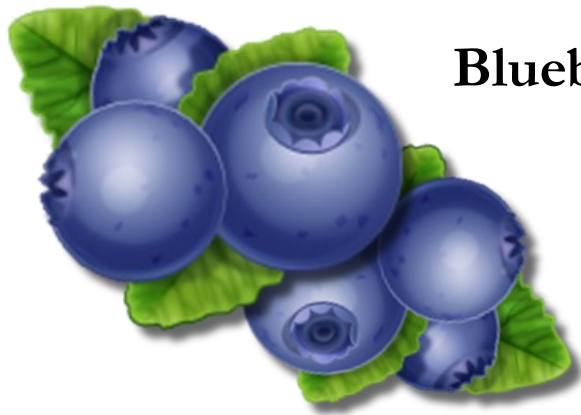


# BLUEBERRIES



Blueberries are divided into 3 classes by fruit ripening time:

**Early Season:** Fruit ripens in early to mid-June

**Mid-Season:** Fruit ripens in mid-July

**Late Season:** Fruit ripens from July into August

**PLANTING:** Blueberry varieties grow to different sizes, but on average, plant 3 feet apart for a hedge, 4-5 feet apart for shrubs. Strip flower buds when planting to encourage first year growth.

**CULTURE:** Well-drained, acidic soil in full sun is essential. Blueberries will grow well in raised beds. Although our native soil is somewhat acidic, amend to make the soil more acidic with a compost for acid loving plants or with soil sulfur. Because of shallow roots, water regularly until established. Blueberries require one inch of rainfall per week and two inches when flowering. To help with soil water retention, add two inches of mulch around the base of each plant, and refresh this layer every one to two years.

**FERTILIZING:** Two applications per year of a balanced fertilizer for acid loving plants are recommended. Apply the first dose in early spring when the buds begin to swell. One month later apply the second dose. Follow the directions on the package to determine dose.

**PRUNING:** Bushes do not need pruning for the first 1-2 years. On older plants, pruning encourages larger fruit and facilitates air circulation, which prevents disease. An ideal time to prune is in early spring (February or March) when the bushes are still dormant. Blueberries produce fruit on one year old wood which arises from four to six year old stems. To increase this type of growth, cut back the ends of twigs to the point where fruit buds are widely spaced. Remove some of the oldest branches to the ground each year. Lowbush varieties such as 'Brunswick' and 'Top Hat' can be pruned by shearing back half of the plant every two to three years.

**POLLINATION:** Most highbush blueberries are self-fertile, but they will produce better and more reliable crops with another variety for pollination. Choose two or three varieties in the same or adjacent fruiting times to ensure pollination and to extend the fruiting season.

**Questions?** Stop by our Information Desk inside the store. We're happy to help!