

Growing Blueberries



Native to North America, blueberries are ornamental edibles that are easy to grow if given the right conditions. Plant them for a healthy harvest and a beautiful addition to the landscape.

Soil

Blueberries grow wild where soil is high in organic matter and slightly acidic. Our local soil is typically lean and alkaline, so we need to amend it for blueberries.

- **Planting in Ground:** Dig a hole 2- 2 ½ times the width of the pot, and as deep as the pot. Blend the soil you dug out with enough **E.B. Stone Azalea, Camellia & Acid Planting Mix** to make a 50-50 mixture. Mix **E.B. Stone Sure Start** into the soil at the bottom of the hole. Place the plant so that the soil in the pot is at the same level as the surrounding soil. Use your soil mixture to fill in around the root ball.
- **Container planting:** Blueberries do well planted in large containers. Use **E.B. Stone Azalea, Camellia & Acid Planting Mix** as your potting soil, adding **E.B. Stone Sure Start** to the soil at the bottom of the pot. Plant so that the soil in the pot is at the same level as the surrounding soil.

Sun

In Lamorinda and other hot-summer areas of Contra Costa County, blueberries grow best with morning sun and afternoon shade, or all-day filtered sun. They will scorch in full afternoon sun. In coastal areas of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, blueberries can be planted in full sun or part shade.

Water

Blueberries can't tolerate dry soil or poor drainage. Irrigate thoroughly each time you water, and don't let plants dry out completely.

Fertilizer

Blueberries thrive with regular applications of **E.B. Stone Organic Citrus & Fruit Tree Food** or **E.B. Stone Organic Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food**. Feed every other month starting when growth begins in spring until after harvest, typically March, May, and July. Use half the recommended amount for plants in containers. Test the pH of your soil occasionally, and if it's creeping up, add **Soil Sulfur** to make it more acid. Aim for a pH of 4.5-5.5.

Pruning

Prune your berries in winter. Remove low branches that will be hard to harvest. Prune back tall upright shoots to the height you want. Thin out the center of the plant to allow air and light penetration. Thin out weak and twiggy side branches, leaving one-half to two-thirds of them in place. Thinning will give you bigger, better berries on the remaining growth.

Chill Hours

Blueberries, like many other fruiting plants, require a certain number of hours below 45° to bear a good crop. Lamorinda and other cold-winter inland areas typically get 700-1100 cumulative chill hours, while coastal areas, such as Oakland, Berkeley, and parts of Martinez, only get 400-700 hours. If you choose a berry that requires more chilling hours than you get, you'll be disappointed in the yield.

Pollination

All blueberries are partially self-fruitful, but you'll get more and larger berries if you plant two or more varieties for cross-pollination.

Ripening Time

Different varieties start to ripen at different times during the season, with each producing ripe berries over the course of several weeks. Early varieties typically start ripening in May, mid-season in June, late season in July. If you plant more than one variety, we recommend choosing varieties that have different ripening times to extend your harvest.

Variety Chart

Ripening Time	Variety	Chill Hours Required	Size (Ht. x Wd)
Early	Bless your Heart	450	4-5ft x 3-4 ft
Early	Duke	800-1000	5-7 ft x 5-7 ft
Early	Earliblue	500	4-5 ft x 4-5 ft
Early	Misty	300	4-6 ft x 4-6 ft
Early	O'Neal	400	5-6 ft X 5-6 ft
Early	Patriot	800-1000	4-6 ft x 4-6 ft
Early	Polaris	800-1000	4 ft x 4 ft
Early	Reka	1000	4-5 ft x 2.5-3.5 ft
Early	Spartan	800	5-6 ft x 4-5 ft
Early	Tophat	1000-1200	1-2 ft x 1-2 ft
Early-Mid	Bountiful Delight	300-500	2-3 ft x 2-3 ft
Early-Mid	Cabernet Splash	500	3-4 ft x 3-4 ft
Early-Mid	Emerald	250	5-6 ft x 5-6 ft
Early-Mid	Jubilee	400-500	4-6 ft x 4-6 ft
Mid	Blueberry Glaze	600	2-3 ft x 2-3 ft
Mid	Bluecrop	800	4-6 ft x 4-6 ft
Mid	Bluejay	800-1000	5-7 ft x 5-7 ft
Mid	Mini Blues	1000	5-6 ft x 3-4 ft
Mid	Peach Sorbet	300	1.5-2 ft x 1.5-2 ft
Mid	Pink Icing	500	3-4 ft x 3-4 ft
Mid	Sharpblue	200	5-6 ft x 4-6 ft
Mid	Southmoon	300-400	6 ft x 6 ft
2 crops: Mid, Late	Perpetua	1000	4-5 ft x 4 ft
Mid-Late	Bountiful Blue	150-200	3-4 ft x 3-4 ft
Mid-Late	Chandler	800-1000	5-6 ft x 5-6 ft
Mid-Late	Jelly Bean	600	18-24 in x 18-24 in
Mid-Late	Midnight Cascade	450	18-24 x 18-24
Mid-Late	Pink Lemonade	300	4-5 ft x 5 ft
Mid-Late	Nocturne	100	5-6 ft x 5-6 ft
Mid-Late	Northblue	800-1000	2-3 ft x 2-3 ft
Mid-Late	Sunshine Blue	150	3 ft x 3 ft
Late	Darrow	500	4-6 ft x 4-5 ft
Very Late	Elliot	800	4-6 ft x 4-5 ft

