

BLUEBERRIES ~ PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS AND CARE

Site Selection & Preparation

- Select a sunny location.
- Soil should be well drained, free of weeds and well worked.
- Locate where water is available, as roots should be kept moist throughout the growing season.
- If soil is poor or marginally drained, raised beds 3-4 feet wide and 8-12 inches high work well.
- Incorporate peat moss into the soil. Dig a hole 2-1/2 feet wide by one foot deep. Remove 1/2 of the soil, mix in an equal portion of premoistened peatmoss and work well.
- For raised beds, mix equal amounts of peatmoss with acid compost or planting mix. Blueberries thrive in acidic soils.
- For soil that is not acidic enough, amend it with Azalea, Camelia, Rhododendron Planting Mix.



Spacing

Plant 2-1/2 feet apart for a solid hedgerow, or space up to 6 feet apart and grow as individual specimens. If planted in rows, allow 8-10 feet between rows, depending on mowing or cultivating equipment.

Planting

Remove from pot and lightly roughen up the outside surface of the rootball. Set the top soil line of the plant about 1-2 inches higher than the existing ground and firm around rootball. Mound soil up along sides of exposed root mass. Water in well. If bareroot plant, spread roots out wide and shallow, covering with 1/2" of soil. Firm soil around roots and water well.

Mulching

Blueberries do best with a 2-4 inch mulch over the roots to conserve moisture, prevent weeds and add organic matter. Bark mulch, acid compost, sawdust, grass clippings, etc all work well. Repeat every other year.

Pruning

Blueberries should be established before allowing them to bear fruit. Thereafter, they should be heavily pruned each year to avoid overfruiting which results in small fruit or poor growth. Remove all blooms as they appear the first year. In years thereafter, follow these steps after the leaves have dropped:

- Remove low growth around the base. If it doesn't grow up, prune it.
- Remove the dead wood, and non-vigorous twiggy wood. Keep the bright colored wood with long (at least 3 inch) laterals. Remove blotchy-colored short growth.
- If 1/3 to 1/2 of the wood has not been removed by the above steps, thin out the fruiting laterals and small branches until this balance has been obtained.

Fertilizing

Using organic fertilizers. A mixture of 1 part kelp, 3 parts fish meal and 3 parts bone meal works well. Apply in early spring. Or use an acidic commercial preparation, such as Azalea, Camellia and Rhododendron Food (5-5-3) for acid-loving plants. Avoid using fresh manures, and always water well after fertilizing.

If using a non-organic fertilizer, on newly planted stock, use two tablespoons of 10-20-10 (or similar fertilizer) in late spring or once plants are established. Be careful! Blueberries are very sensitive to over fertilization. For subsequent years, use one ounce of fertilizer for each year of plant age, to a total of eight ounces per plant. Apply in early spring and again in late spring for best results.