

Ron's Organics, Inc.

Growing Blueberries

Blueberry Growing Essentials:

- Sunlight - Fruits need plenty of sunlight, whenever it begins to branch or bramble.
- Soil - Almost all fruits do best in slightly acidic soil, somewhere between a pH of 5.5 and 6.5. Blueberries prefer a soil of even greater acidity of between 4.09 and 5.0.
- Drainage - Adequate drainage is important. Find a suitable site, avoiding low lying areas that collect water or are slow to drain in the spring.
- Pollination - Most fruit trees, including blueberries have both male and female organs on the same flower, but not all are self pollinating. The best bet for blueberries is to have different varieties of blueberries within 100 feet, so bees can travel and cross pollinate. Blueberries cannot be pollinated by their own pollen!

Blueberries do very well in pots or containers with a good Acidified Potting Soil.

Home Garden Sites:

STARTING RIGHT WITH BLUEBERRIES

Blueberries bring a unique combination of delicious fruit and striking ornamental beauty to the garden and landscape. Blueberries are easy to grow, require little care, and are seldom bothered by pests. If a few basic steps are followed your blueberry plants can thrive and last a lifetime.

Varieties

You may want to select varieties that ripen at different times or feature large fruit (best for fresh eating and desserts) or small fruit (best for muffins and pancakes). Bushes with brilliant fall color or different growth habits offer the gardener lots of choices to use throughout the landscape. For blueberry lovers, allow at least two plants per family member.

Site Selection and Preparation

Select a sunny location in well drained soil free of weeds and well worked. Locate in an area where irrigation water is available as best results will be obtained by keeping the root zone moist throughout the growing season. Where the soil is poor or marginally drained, raised beds 3-4 feet wide and 8-12" high work very well for blueberries.

A fail safe way to grow blueberries in almost any soil is to incorporate Acidified Cotton Burr Compost into the planting medium. For planting directly in the ground, work up a planting area approximately 2-1/2 feet in diameter and one foot deep. Remove 1/3 to 1/2 of the soil. Add an equal amount of pre-moistened peat moss and mix well. One 4 cubic foot compressed bale will usually be sufficient for 4-5 plants, for raised beds mix equal volumes peat moss with acid compost or planting mix (Azalea Mix works well). Blueberries thrive in acidic soils. You can use Acidified Cotton Burr Compost or an Iron and Soil Acidifier.

Spacing - Blueberries can be planted as close as 2-1/2 feet apart to form solid hedgerows or spaced up to 6 feet apart and grown as individual specimens. If planted in rows, allow 8-10 feet between the rows.

Planting - For container stock, remove from pot and lightly roughen up the outside surface of the root ball. Set the top soil line of the plant about 1-2 inches higher than the existing ground and firm around root ball. Mound soil up along sides of exposed root mass. Watering well. For bare root plants, spread roots out wide and shallow, cover with 1/2" of soil. Firm soil around roots and water well.

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

Pruning - It is important that blueberries get established before allowing them to bear fruit. Thereafter, they should be heavily pruned each year to avoid over fruiting which results in small or poor growth.

Remove all blooms as they appear the first year. In years thereafter, follow these steps after the leaves have dropped.

Fertilizing - Blueberries like acid fertilizers such as Blood Meal and Cottonseed meal. For newly planted stock, use 2 tablespoons in late spring or once plants are established. (Careful! Blueberries are very sensitive to over fertilization!) For subsequent years, use 1 ounce of fertilizer for each year from planting to a total of 8 ounces per plant. Apply in early spring and again in late spring for best results. Always water well after fertilizing. Avoid using fresh manure.

Last But Not Least, Enjoy Your delicious fruit