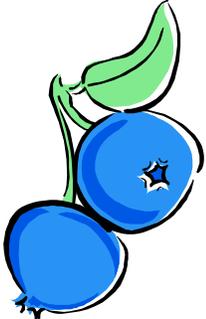


Unique Garden Centre

BLUEBERRIES



With their sweet taste and bountiful harvests, it comes as a surprise that there are not more low-bush blueberries being grown in Saskatchewan gardens. Because these plants are very tolerant of the severe winter climate and have an ability to abide dry soils, their popularity is destined to grow as a favorite fruit producer. Blueberries are closely related to azaleas, rhododendrons, and cranberries and are native to Canada and range from the far north to the south.

Low-bush blueberries spread by a system of underground stems know as rhizomes, which form a network under the surface of the plant. Each spring, new shoots arise from the underground rhizomes and from the new buds on the stems located above the ground. Those buds which are at the end of the previous season's shoots burst into pretty blooms of white and pink. Any gardener attempting to grow blueberries should be aware that the tips of all growing shoots suddenly die in the middle of the summer, leaving the remains of a small, withered leaf. This should not cause alarm, as it is the natural cycle of the plant. Fruit will ripen 1 – 2 months after bloom.

Blueberries need full sun and well-drained acidic soil in order to survive. If it is necessary to alter the soil's pH level, one may add peatmoss to the soil at the time of planting in order to enrich the soil and increase the acidity level.

Blueberries should not be pruned for the first four years. In the fifth year, prune the berries severely when the plants are dormant, using either hand pruners or a lawnmower. The low cutting stimulates the growth of new shoots directly from the roots. Pruning should take place every other year afterwards, so that the plant will produce fruit every second year. For the plant to bear fruit every year, one may prune a different half of the planting each year.

There are several types of blueberries, hardy in Saskatchewan.

Chippewa – This is a self-pollinating variety of blueberry. It is extremely productive with large dark blue fruit and good blueberry flavour. The glossy, dark green leaves develop a bright red fall colour. Best grown in well-drained acidic soil in full sun. Mature size 3 ft tall and wide.

Northblue – Large flavorful dark blue fruit are produced amongst attractive blue green foliage. Grows best in moist acidic soils in full to part sun. Pollinate with another variety for increased production. Great for fresh uses. Grows to about 2 to 2 ½' high spreading to 3 feet wide.

Northcountry – Sweet mild sky blue fruit with blue green foliage. Produces abundance of fruit for 3 weeks. Production increases when pollinated by another variety. Sweet to mild, tasty fruit. Grows to about 2 to 2 ½' high spreading to 3 feet wide. Grows best in moist acidic soils in full to part sun.

Northland – Small dark blue berry with wild berry taste. Good ornamental use with blue green foliage and white flowers in spring. Cross pollinate for higher yield. Grows 4 feet tall and 5 feet wide.

Northsky – Small, very sweet, sky blue berries. Known as the hardiest of all blueberries. Bluish green foliage with white flowers in spring. Great for small areas. Grows best in moist acidic soils in full to part sun, 1 ½’ high and 1 ½ - 2’ wide.



The following is a list of some of the problems blueberries are susceptible to, and the organic medications that will aid in the problem.

Symptom	Problem	Remedy
Oldest leaves turn pale green, and then change to red, purple or yellow.	Lack of nitrogen	Fertilize with a high nitrogen fertilizer with sulfur to lower pH of soil
Leaves are undersized and dark green, then develop purple patches.	Phosphorus deficiency	Add phosphorus fertilizer with sulfur to lower pH of soil
Leaves turn tan or brown, and dry up, but remain attached to the plant.	Lack of water	Be sure that entire root zone is receiving water when applying water and or increase frequency.
Watersoaked splotches along veins of leaves, wilting of twigs, and browning blossoms. Similar to frost damage.	Mummyberry Disease (fungal)	Apply fungicide to the bushes pre-bloom and during bloom to control. Use recommended fungicide at proper rates.
Greyish brown mold on leaves, blossoms or twigs.	Botrytis blight (bacterial)	Apply a mulch like sawdust or shredded bark with a dry surface.
Red blotches on leaves in the early summer. Later, a felt-like fungal mat appears on the underside of the leaf.	Red Leaf (fungal)	Remove and destroy infected plants.
Maggot appears on fruit.	Blueberry Maggot	Use maggot traps before berries turn blue.

Other potential insect pests to blueberries are the blueberry blossom weevil, blueberry leafminer, blueberry stem borer, cherry fruitworm, cranberry fruitworm, cranberry rootworms and grubs, and plum curculio.