

## Zenith Holland Nursery

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### Growing Blueberries: Blue Clustered Crops for the PNW

Growing Blueberries really isn't that hard, provided that you give them the right conditions in order for them to thrive. Here are some suggestions:

**Location & Soil-** Choose a spot that receives full to part sun for 6-8 hours. Avoid high wind areas, Protect branches from heavy snow pack. Needs well-draining, Acidic Soil high in organic matter.

**Water-** Likes regular water, especially during summer- to reduce heat stress and produce juicy fruit.

**Fertilizer-** Use an Organic Acid Fertilizer, same one used for Rhodies, Azaleas, Heather, Camellias, PNW Natives & Ferns, etc.- we like G&B. Apply during initial planting, then 2-3 times during the growing season- Mid-March and May. Then top dress or mulch with an acid planting mix to conserve moisture, choke out weeds and protect roots.

**Planting-** In early spring to early summer or fall, before or after extreme heat or below extreme freezing weather. Space 4' feet + apart, depending upon variety.

**Pruning-** Allow your plants to grow and establish for at least 3 years before you prune. Do not let plants younger than 3 years bear fruit, this can kill your plant. Or purchase older plants that can bear fruit sooner. Established plants can be pruned as needed- goal is to promote growth of strong new growth, remove dead & crossing branches (thin) and remove older than 6-year-old canes. Use clean tools!

**Disease-** Blueberries are pretty easy care plants, provided you practice Right Plant, Right Place Rule; Use good organic acid fertilizers and soils; and Water adequately.

**Types of Blueberries-** There are many species of native blueberries and hybridized varieties bred for fruit taste, size, chilling hours and overall performance.

**Northern Highbush-** (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) are the most widely planted blueberries in the Northern US & Canada- mostly the types we carry (see below). Usually upright, large shrubs up to 6' tall or more. No. Highbush require a minimum of 800 chilling hours for proper dormancy. Self-fertile but planting 2 increases pollination\*. **Southern Highbush** (or Rabbit Eye) grow best in the SE US and coastal CA but can grow as far north as Seattle. Hybridized for heat tolerance and low winter chilling, use another So High Bush for a pollinator. **Half-high Blueberries** cultivars are crosses of wild selections of No Highbush and **Lowbush** (Native, ground cover or low growing blueberries). Half-highs are lower growing, compact shrubs with yields not quite as good as No Highbush, yet retain wild flavor from Lowbush parentage.

**Chill Hours=** is a measure of accumulated hours of temperatures below 45 deg. F in the dormant season. Chill Hours **High 800-1000** (No Highbush, Half-High, Lowbush) chill hours **Low 150-800 Hours** (So Highbush)

**Choosing Varieties.** \*Each is Self-Fertile, but planting 2 different varieties that bloom at the same time will increase fruit yields. So pick two of one ripening time, better yet 2 of each for long harvest season.

We carry the following mostly *Northern Highbush*, except where noted: **Bluecrop** (ms), **Bluegold** (ms), **Blueray**(ms), **Chandler**(mid-L,G), **Darrow**(L-G), **Draper** (ms), **Duke** ( E ), **Earliblue**(VE), **Patriot**(E-G), **Pink Lemonade** (mid-L), **Pink Popcorn** (early-mid)**Spartan**(E-G), **Tophat** (ms), **Toro**(ms-G)

*E=early ms= mid-season mid-L=mid-late L=late G=giant berries* (selections may vary)

**Bluecrop (ms)-** Large, light blue, firm & flavorful fruit that sweetens when fully ripe. Berries mid-July thru August. Fall foliage mix yellow, orange and red. Scarlet new wood and winter stem color. For fresh

eating, baking & sauces / syrups. Considered one of the best all around, very popular. Upright open bush 4-6' x 6'W. Grown Commercially. USDA 4-7

**Bluegold (ms)**- Bright white spring flowers produces heavy crops of sweet, flavorful, sky blue fruit. Compact rounded bush grows 4' x 4'. For fresh eating, baking & sauces / syrups. Brilliant yellow fall foliage and yellow winter wood make this unusual at must have! USDA 4-7

**Blueray (ms)**- Heavy producer of high quality, large powder blue berries with outstanding dessert flavor. Does well in hot summers or very cold winters. Rosy pink flowers turn bright white in full bloom. Burgundy fall color. Upright open bush 5' x 5'W. Old fashion favorite. USDA 4-7

**Chandler(mid-L)**- Giant fruit the size of a cherry with delicious flavor. Holds distinction of the world's largest blueberry. Long ripening season, fresh picked fruit for over 6 weeks. Can pollinate other mid or late season blueberries. Vigorous bush with slightly spreading habit reaching 5-6'. USDA 4-7

**Darrow (L)**- "Blue-Ribbon" giant sized fruit are slightly flattened, light blue with delightful robust flavor. Vigorous shrub reaching 5-6'. May be one of the largest fruits, size of a half dollar. USDA 5-7

**Draper (ms)**- Large, crisp, light blue berry. Bright white spring flowers lead to mid-summer sweet fruit. Grows to 4-5' tall & wide. USDA 5-7

**Duke (E)**- Medium to large, light blue berries with mild sweet flavor. Firm, attractive berry holds its fresh quality longer than most others. One of the heaviest most consistent producers (over 20 lbs per mature bush). Upright bush growing to 4-6' tall and wide, branches may droop when ripe. Yellow-orange fall foliage. USDA 4-7

**Earliblue (VE)**- Light blue, large, delicious and sweet flavored berries- the first to ripen. Upright bush with stout, crimson canes and large glossy green leaves. Avoid planting in frost pockets to protect flowers blooming in late spring. Grows 4-6' x 6' USDA 5-7

**Patriot (E)**- Selected by Univ. of Maine as best cold hardy that bears consistent crops of large sized, flavorful dark blue berries. Low growing to 4' with dark green summer foliage and fiery orange fall colors. Performs in a wider range of soils and can take wetter spot than most. USDA 3-7

**Pink Lemonade (mid-L)**- Pinkish-white summer flowers produce pale greenish berries that ripen to deep pink colored, pleasant flavored fruit. Leaves turn a blend of golden yellow to brilliant orange. Moderate grower to 4'-5' tall and 5' wide. USDA 4-8

**Pink Popcorn (early-mid)**- White spring flowers develop into a medium sized blush pink fruit with true blueberry flavor and aroma. Fresh eating, baking, syrups & sauces. Compact grower to 3-5' tall & wide. USDA 4-8

**Spartan (E)**- One of the most attractive berry- quarter sized, light blue with a delicious tangy sweet flavor. Larger upright bush 5-6' tall with glossy green leaves that turn orange and yellow in autumn. Prefers well drained, acid soil rich in organic matter. USDA 5-7

**Tophat (ms)**- Dwarf cultivar (cross No. Highbush with wild Lowbush) growing to 1.5' x 1.5' tall & wide. Plentiful, dainty white blooms in spring lead to pea sized light blue berries. Use as a low border or in pots. Can be used as a Bonsai. Fiery crimson fall foliage. USDA 3-7

**Toro (ms)**- Produces full, heavy clusters of sky blue delectable berries. One of the most attractive ornamental shrubs-upright, compact habit 4'x4' with hot pink flowers turning bright white contrasting with bronze colored spring foliage. Deep green summer foliage turns shades of scarlet in fall. USDA 4-7.