

Latin Name/Genus: *Vaccinium [Cyanococcus]*
Family: *Ericaceae*

Difficulty: Easy, with slow-moderate growth rate; can be potted

Season: Warm season

Exposure: Full-sun

Zone: Between Zones 3-9



Timing: Generally planted in early-mid spring; in zones 6 or higher, they can also be planted late fall.

Starting: Ensure a sunny but wind-sheltered location is chosen for planting, with good [sandy] soil drainage, high acidity, and adequate moisture. Space bushes out 1-1.5m (4-5') apart, in rows 2.5-3m (9-10') apart; plant bare-root bushes no more than 1cm (½") below soil surface; container-grown bushes can be planted at the same depth they were in nursery pots. To grow from seed, seeds must first freeze for 90 days to mimic winter dormancy.

Days to Maturity: From transplant date.

Growing: Aim for a pH level of 4.0-5.2, as blueberries love acidic soil. Ensure they receive full sun; sandy soil is preferable to dense clay. Adding a layer of mulch after planting helps keep the soil acidic; water deeply at least once per week.

Nutrient Preferences: Soil full of organic matter that drains well works best; best to amend the soil a season prior to planting. Don't fertilize plants their first year, as their shallow roots are sensitive. Sulfur or ammonium sulfur can be mixed into the top 15cm (6") of soil to lower pH as required.

Harvest: Blueberry bushes generally don't produce much fruit their first few years, however, production increases exponentially by the 6th or 7th season; typically ready to harvest between June – August. The more bushes planted will result in larger yields and larger fruit. Ripe berries will readily come off their stems; sweetest flavour if allowed to stay on the plant for at least a week after turning blue.

Companion Planting: Blueberries benefit from being planted near evergreens (as they provide acidity in surrounding soil), dogwoods, rhododendrons/azaleas, heather, thyme, cranberry, columbine, clover, laurel, holly, lilac, ferns, yarrow, and strawberries; avoid planting near nightshades (tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, potatoes), melons, salad greens, dill, and brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, kale, brussels sprouts).