

# GROWING BLUEBERRIES

## MULCHING

Blueberries do best with 2-4" mulch over the roots to conserve moisture, prevent weeds, and add organic nutrients. Aged sawdust, compost, grass clippings, coffee grounds, etc. work well. Repeat every year. Keeping plants weeded is important.

## PRUNING

It is important that blueberries get established before allowing them to bear fruit. After that, they should be heavily pruned each year to avoid over-fruiting 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:

1. Remove low growth around the base.

If it doesn't grow up, it gets pruned out!

2. Remove the dead wood, and non-vigorous twiggy wood. Select for bright colored wood with long (at least 3 inch) laterals. Remove blotchy colored short growth.

3. If  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the wood has not been removed by the above steps, then thin out the fruiting laterals and small branches until this balance has been obtained.

## FERTILIZING

Blueberries need acidic soil to thrive and produce well. Using an organic acid mix fertilizer is ideal.

**Down To Earth Acid Mix** is the perfect fertilizer for blueberries! Apply fertilizer underneath the mulch (simply rake back mulch, put down fertilizer and rake mulch back on top).

For best results, apply fertilizers in early spring and again in late spring. Avoid manures, and remember, blueberries do not want to be over-fertilized.

## CHECK LIST

- **Blueberry Plants** – Choose at least two with similar bloom times.
- **Fertilizer** – Down To Earth Acid Mix.
- **Mulch** – Sawdust, compost, coffee grounds, coir fiber, peat moss.
- **Lots of Sun!**

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

## VARIETIES

Blueberry varieties are distinguished by their climate suitability and ripening season. 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 with soil that is well drained, worked and weeded. It is very important to keep the root zone moist throughout the growing season. With poor or marginally drained soil, raised beds 3-4 ft. wide and 8-12 inches high work very well for blueberries. Mix in compost, and **Down To Earth Acid Mix** fertilizer for a good start.

### For planting directly into the ground:

Work up a planting area approximately 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  ft. in diameter and 1 ft. deep. Remove  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the soil. Add an equal amount of organic compost and/or peat moss and mix well.

### For raised beds:

Mix equal parts existing soil with compost and/or peat moss. *Blueberries thrive in acidic soils.*

## SPACING

Blueberries can be planted as close as 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  ft. apart to form solid hedgerows, or spaced up to 6 ft. apart to grow individually. Allow 8-10 ft. between rows, depending on equipment used for mowing or cultivating.

## PLANTING

### For container stock:

Remove from pot and lightly roughen up the outside surface of the rootball. Set the top soil line of the plant about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. higher than the existing ground, and firm around rootball. Mound soil up along sides of exposed root mass. Water in well.

### For bareroot plants:

Spread roots out sideways and shallow, cover with  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of soil. Firm soil around roots and water well.

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- **Blueberry Plants** – Choose at least two with similar bloom times.
- **Fertilizer** – Down To Earth Acid Mix 4-3-6.
- **Mulch** – Sawdust, compost, coffee grounds, coir fiber, peat moss.
- **Lots of Sun!**

**Down To Earth Distributors**  
*Home Grown since 1977*  
*Eugene, Oregon*

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