

# Blueberry Care

The blueberry shrub is highly ornamental in the landscape with pleasing white flowers in spring, delicious blueberries in summer, and attractive red, orange, or purple foliage in autumn.

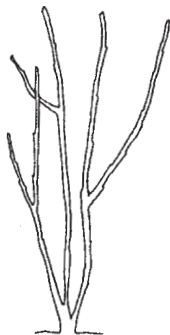
**Location:** Blueberries do best in a consistently moist, well-drained soil in full sun or part shade. They require an acid soil with a soil pH of 4.0 to 5.0 and prefer a soil high in organic matter. It is a good idea to work large quantities of peat moss, compost, or rotted saw dust into the planting area before actually planting the shrubs.

**Planting:** Dig the hole 2 times larger than the diameter of the pot. Prepare a planting mixture of 1/3 perlite, 1/3 peat moss and 1/3 topsoil. Place the plant into the hole with the top of the root ball 1" above the ground level. Back fill with planting mixture and tamp firm. Make a basin around the edge of the hole to retain water. Mulch with 2-3" of pine bark mulch and water thoroughly.

**Spacing & Pollination:** The bushes should be planted about 6' apart in rows, and with 8-10 feet between rows. Plant several cultivars to improve pollination and increase yields. A mature bush can produce up to 10qts. of fruit yearly.



before pruning



after pruning

*Thin young blueberry bushes (2 to 5 years old) by removing all dead and diseased wood, and about one-fourth of their main branches.*

**Fertilization:** Plants should be fertilized twice each year - once at the beginning of bloom and a second time in October. Established plants should receive approximately 1 cup of 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer each time. New plants will need only about 1/2 as much. Test the soil pH yearly and make any necessary corrections by adding iron sulphate or aluminum sulphate.

**Pruning:** Blueberries produce the largest and best fruit on vigorous new branches. Prune during dormancy to remove any dead, diseased or broken branches as well as to thin out the shrub and encourage new fruitful growth.

**Maintenance:** Blueberries like an organic, acid, moist soil. This can be maintained by keeping 3-4" layer of organic mulch such as pine bark or pine needles. They should be watered thoroughly during any period of extended drought. A bird netting may be necessary to protect the ripening berries from eager birds and a wire enclosure for winter makes excellent rabbit protection.