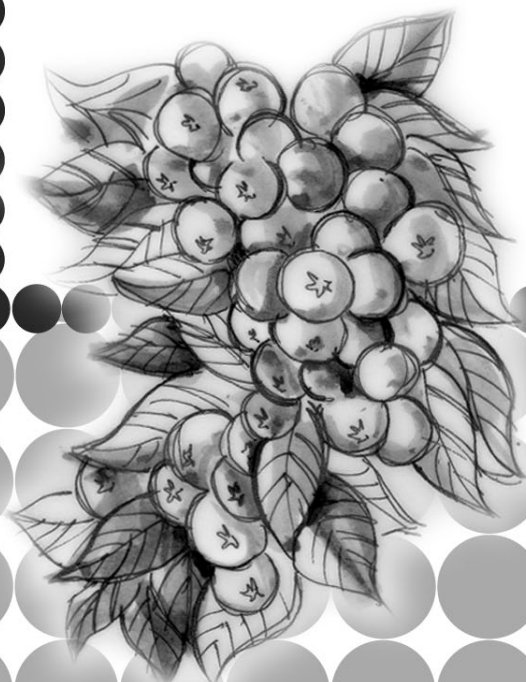


Enjoy Louisiana Blueberries



LSU
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Blueberries are one of the newest fruit crops for Louisiana. The Rabbiteye blueberry (*Vaccinium Ashei*), so called because of the pink color of the berry as it ripens, is the species most successfully grown in the South.

Breeding programs throughout the Southeast have developed several highly productive varieties which produce large, juicy, aromatic berries with flavor comparable to that of berries grown in the traditional blueberry sections of the United States.

More and more people are enthusiastically planting blueberry bushes, not only for home use, but for profit as well.

Pick-Your-Own Blueberries

The pick-your-own blueberry patch is becoming popular. This method of harvesting and marketing is relatively new to Louisiana, but quite popular in other southern states.

Pick-your-own methods mean more profit for the grower because they reduce labor and transportation costs, and they also provide the opportunity for a family outing and an economical source of high quality produce as well. Many urban families enjoy seeing how food is grown, taking part in harvesting and returning home with enough fruit to freeze or can.

When Do Blueberries Ripen?

Some varieties of Rabbiteye blueberries begin ripening the first week of June. Others continue ripening through the early part of July. Most pick-your-own plantings will have enough varieties to provide picking for six to eight weeks. Three or more pickings of each variety at weekly intervals are generally required to harvest the crop.

Selection

It's important to be familiar with the ripening characteristics of blueberries, especially if you pick your own. Some varieties may have fruit that is highly colored, but it still may not be at peak maturity. Blue-

berries increase in size and improve in flavor for several days after they turn blue. It will take three to six days for them to ripen fully after turning blue.

Unripe berries will turn blue after harvest, but sugar content and size are noticeably less than when berries ripen completely on the bush. Overripe berries may shrivel and drop.

Blueberries from other sections of the country are plentiful in supermarkets in July and early August. You may even buy enough of these to freeze for such delicacies as blueberry muffins later on. Be sure the fruit is plump and firm. Keep berries refrigerated until ready for use, or repackage in suitable freezing bags or containers and freeze immediately without washing.

Nutritive Value

Blueberries are a dieter's delight—that is if you don't put them on cheesecake! A cup of raw blueberries has only 90 calories and provides substantial amounts of vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. They are a good source of iron, vitamin A and niacin (one of the B vitamins), and a fair source of vitamin C.

Medicinal Value

New research studies indicate that the blueberry, like the cranberry, has bacteria-fighting properties that help prevent urinary tract infections. The berries contain two compounds which partially control *Escherichia coli*, the major cause of urinary tract infection, by preventing the bacteria from clinging to the cells lining the urinary and digestive tracts.

Preserving Blueberries

Blueberries, fresh, frozen or canned, are a real taste treat. They are nature's convenience food—no peeling, pitting or coring! Simply wash and enjoy them fresh as they are, or use for cereals, salads, muffins, pancakes, tarts and pies, or make delicious toppings for ice cream, waffles or cheesecake! Freeze them (without washing), and you will have an excellent product to use like fresh later on. Can them for pies, cobblers, cakes and muffins, or conserve them as tasty syrups, jams or jellies.

Freezing

Freeze blueberries without washing. They are different from other fruits in that the skins seem to be much tenderer if they are frozen without washing. When washed before freezing, blueberry skins are tough, even after cooking in certain recipes. Another advantage of

not washing is that the berries are frozen individually and can be easily poured from the freezer container in whatever amount you need.

Remove stems and trash, package tightly in moisture-vapor-proof plastic freezer bags, rigid containers or glass jars, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal airtight and freeze. Remove from freezer, rinse in cold water and use immediately.

Canning

To have canned whole blueberries with best texture and flavor for use like fresh in muffins, pies, cakes, etc., blanch them before packing in jars. Work with only two or three quarts at a time.

Sort, wash and stem. Put berries in a single layer of cheese-cloth or thin white cloth about 20 inches square. Hold cloth by corners, and dip berries in a kettle of boiling water. Hold for about 30 seconds, or until juice spots show on the cloth. (You could also use a blanching basket.) Put the bundle in cold water immediately to cool the berries. Drain.

Fill hot jars to within 1/2 inch of top, shaking to pack berries. **Do not add water or sweetening.** Adjust lids and process in boiling water bath canner 15 minutes for pints, 20 minutes for quarts.

For fair exhibits, use syrup pack: Fill jars with blanched berries, cover with hot light syrup (1 cup sugar to 3 cups water), seal and process as above.

Blueberry Jam

4 cups crushed berries (about 1 1/2 quarts whole berries)
1 box powdered pectin
4 cups sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Wash and crush fully ripe blueberries. Measure 4 cups; add lemon juice. Measure sugar and set aside. Place berries in a large, flat-bottomed kettle, add pectin and stir until dissolved. Bring to a rolling boil, add sugar and stir until dissolved. One tablespoon contains about 50 calories.

Bring to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Boil hard for 1 minute and 15 seconds. Remove from heat, skim with a metal spoon and pour into sterilized jars to within 1/4 inch of top. Seal with new lids and process in a water bath canner at simmering temperature for 10 minutes. Makes about 7 half-pints.

Spiced Blueberry Jam

2 quarts blueberries
4 1/2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon allspice
2 (3-ounce) pouches liquid fruit pectin

Crush berries; add sugar and spices. Bring quickly to a boil in large kettle, stirring constantly. Boil 2 minutes.

Add pectin, stir well. Skim off foam with a metal spoon. Pour into hot sterilized half-pint or pint jars. Fill to within 1/4 inch of top. Wipe edges and seal with new lids prepared according to manufacturer's instructions. Process 10 minutes in a water bath canner at simmering temperature. Makes about 3 pints. One tablespoon contains about 50 calories.

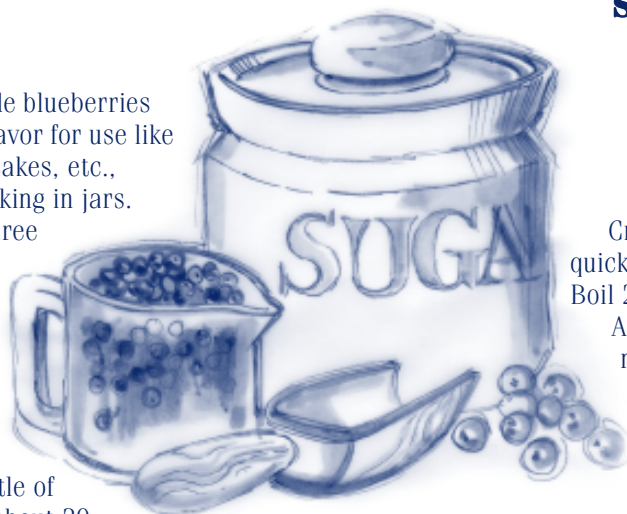
Blueberry - Peach Pie

Marie Deville, Evangeline Parish
State and Grand National 4-H Winner
N.J.H.A.

Pastry for double crust
9-inch pie

3 cups sliced peaches (fresh, frozen or canned)
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons margarine (lower fat)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Combine peaches, blueberries and lemon juice. In a small bowl, combine sugar, cornstarch and salt. Sprinkle sugar mixture over fruit and toss lightly. Let stand 15 minutes. Turn into pastry-lined pie pan, mounding in center. Dot with margarine.



Blueberry Jelly

3 1/2 cups strained juice
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 box powdered pectin
4 1/2 cups sugar**

Crush about 6 cups ripe fresh or frozen blueberries. Cover with 3 cups water and simmer 10 minutes. Drain in colander, then strain juice. Measure juices into a large pot (about 8- to 10-quart size). Mix pectin with juice and bring quickly to a hard, rolling boil, stirring occasionally. Add all the sugar at one time. Stir until sugar dissolves, and bring again to a full rolling boil (a boil that rises to the top and cannot be stirred down).

Boil hard for 1 minute and 15 seconds, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; skim off foam with a metal spoon. Pour at once into sterilized jelly jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe jar edge with a damp towel, and seal with new lids according to manufacturer's instructions. Makes about 5 half-pint jars. NOTE: You can process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath to ensure a good seal.

**Low methoxyl pectins are available for making jelly with less sugar or no sugar.

Blueberry Pancakes

2 eggs
2 cups buttermilk
2 cups flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons melted margarine or oil
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

Preheat griddle. Beat eggs until light and fluffy; add milk. Sift together dry ingredients. Add to egg-milk mixture; beat until smooth. Stir in margarine and fold in blueberries. Yield: 4 servings. Try with blueberry syrup! Each serving provides 490 calories, 59.2 gm carbohydrate, 23.7 gm fat, 6 gm dietary fiber.



Blueberry Muffins

Make any meal a feast!

2 cups sifted flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
1 egg, beaten
1/4 cup oil
1 cup lowfat milk



Sift dry ingredients together. Stir in blueberries. Mix egg, oil and milk together thoroughly. Combine mixtures, stirring just enough to dampen flour. Fill greased muffin pans 2/3 full. Bake in moderately hot oven, 400 degrees F, 20-25 minutes. Makes about 18 muffins. Each muffin provides 111 calories, 17.5 gm carbohydrate, 3.7 gm fat.

Blueberry Pie

Pastry for double crust pie
4 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel
1 cup sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch (or 1/3 cup flour)
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
2 tablespoons margarine
2 tablespoons sugar-cinnamon mixture

Prepare pastry. Add lemon juice and peel to berries. Stir dry ingredients together and mix with berries. Turn into pastry-lined pan; dot with margarine. Cover with top crust, seal and flute edges. Cut slits in top and sprinkle with about 2 tablespoons of sugar-cinnamon mixture if desired.

To prevent excessive browning, cover edges with a 2- to 3-inch strip of foil. Remove foil last few minutes of baking. Bake 10 minutes in a 450 degree F oven; reduce heat to 350 degrees F and bake about 30 to 40 minutes longer, or until crust is brown and juice bubbles through the slits. Serve warm. Delicious with vanilla ice milk!

For Basic Blueberry Pie Filling:

Use same ingredients as above. Mix dry ingredients and lemon peel; add 1 cup water gradually, stirring until smooth. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add blueberries and cook 3 or 4 minutes until clear and thickened, stirring carefully to prevent crushing berries. Remove from heat, add lemon juice and margarine. Use in recipes calling for blueberry pie filling.

Blueberry Cheesecake

1 baked graham cracker crust or 1 baked
pastry shell, cooled
1 8-ounce package cream cheese (use light)
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1/3 cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla
Blueberry Sauce (See recipe below)

Let cream cheese soften; whip until fluffy. Gradually add condensed milk while continuing to beat until well blended. Add lemon juice and vanilla; blend well. Pour into prepared crust. Chill an hour or two before covering top of pie with blueberry sauce. Blueberry or cherry pie filling, strawberry or cherry glaze can be substituted for blueberry sauce. Serves 12. Each serving (with Blueberry Sauce) provides 290 calories, 49.1 gm carbohydrate, 8.8 gm fat.

Blueberry Sauce

(For cheesecake, waffles, tarts and ice cream)

2 cups fresh or frozen
blueberries
1/3 cup sugar
Pinch salt
1 tablespoon
cornstarch
2 tablespoons
lemon juice
2 tablespoons
water

Rinse berries. Mix
together dry ingredients

in a saucepan; add liquids and
stir until smooth. Add
blueberries, bring to a
boil and cook for about
2 minutes or until clear
and slightly thickened,
stirring carefully to avoid
crushing the berries. Serve
warm or cold.



Roll out remaining pastry dough to an 11-inch circle. Carefully place pastry on top of filling. Trim top crust and fold under edges of bottom crust. Flute edges. Bake 45-50 minutes or until fruit is tender and crust is golden brown. Partially cool on rack; serve warm with ice milk, if desired. Serves 8. Each serving (without ice milk) provides 376 calories, 55.5 gm carbohydrate, 16.6 gm fat, 2.5 gm dietary fiber.

Luscious Blueberry Syrup

4 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
2 cups water

Crush berries thoroughly, add water and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer 3 to 4 minutes. Drain through colander, pressing berries to extract all the juice. Strain juice through three or four thicknesses of damp cheesecloth or jelly bag. Makes about 2 3/4 cups of juice or enough for two batches of syrup.

For Syrup:

1 1/4 cups juice
1 1/2 cups sugar plus 1/4 cup white corn
syrup, or 1 3/4 cups sugar*
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Mix ingredients in saucepan large enough for mixture to boil freely. Stir to dissolve sugar. Bring to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Boil 3 or 4 minutes. Remove from heat, skim with a metal spoon and pour into sterilized syrup bottles or jars, seal and refrigerate. For long-term storage, fill half-pint or pint canning jars to within 1/4 inch of top, seal and process in a boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes. Makes about 2 half-pints.

*Using part corn syrup adds thickness without extra sweetness.

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