



Garden Scoop

Growing Blueberries

BY K.S.Kennen, MGV

Cultivars of blueberries have been developed to grow in Central Florida. These cultivars, rabbit eye and Southern highbush, were developed from Florida native blueberries, because this part of the state has so few chill hours that allow plants to go into dormancy and then produce flowers leading to fruit. It is important that these are the cultivars you select from if you want to grow blueberries.

Southern Highbush Blueberry Cultivars

Cultivar	Benefits	Considerations
Emerald	Vigorous bush, early ripening, large, high-quality berries	
Jewel	Low chilling, early ripening, high berry quality	Moderately susceptible to phytophthora root rot and highly susceptible to rust leaf spot disease
Windsor	Vigorous, semi-spreading growth habit, large berries	Berries have deep picking scar; issue commercially
Springhigh	Vigorous, excellent survival, darker berries	Berry skin tends to tear during harvest; flower thrips management is necessary
Sweetcrisp	Exceptional berry quality and post-harvest life	Below average yield and berry size
Farthing	Vigorous, relatively free of disease, large, firm berries, higher yields	Dormant pruning can be necessary to prevent over-fruiting

Rabbit Eye Cultivar

Cultivar	Benefits	Considerations
Beckyblue, Bonita, Climax	Extended harvest season	Less productive

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Lake County MGV Mission Statement

The mission of UF/IFAS Lake County Master Gardener Volunteers is to assist extension agents by providing horticultural education programs and current research-based information to the public through plant clinics, community outreach and Discovery Gardens.

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Growing Blueberries

The cultivars in the prior charts allow for a varied selection but be sure to have at least two different cultivars when planting blueberries because they require cross pollination from different cultivars. When you have selected which blueberry plants you want, check the acidity of your soil since these plants like a pH from 4.5 to 5.5. One easy way to help adjust the soil for blueberry bushes is to work peat moss into the soil and mulch with pine bark since it will decompose and help to maintain the needed acidity. If you have an area where azaleas or camellias grow, then the blueberries would do well there also. You can also mix granular sulfur into the soil months before planting to help adjust acidity if the soil is too alkaline.

Planting should be done between mid December and mid February. Purchase plants that are two feet tall with well-developed roots. Break up the root ball of container grown blueberries and spread out the roots of bare-rooted plants. Set the plants at the same height they were grown at the nursery. Mulch with pine bark in a four foot diameter. Plants should be pruned at the time of planting. Leave three of the stronger canes and prune away the smallest and weakest branches. If the height is supported by a weaker root system, trim away one-third of the height. Also, it is important to remove all the blooms on first year plants so no fruit is allowed to establish in order to have a healthier, more productive plant in the future.

During the first year of planting, blueberry plants need one to two inches of water every week. After the first year, if the summer brings rain every ten days, the plants should not need any watering. During March, mature plants require .06 of rain or irrigation a week. As temperatures increase, 1.0–1.2 inches of water per week (rainfall plus irrigation) will be needed during the late spring and summer months.

Fertilization is also a part of having a successful crop and should be frequent and light. The first year apply one ounce of fertilizer spread evenly within a two foot diameter circle of the bush in April, June, August, and October. If there is heavy mulch, spread one and one-half ounce of fertilizer. The second year, apply two ounces of fertilizer in a three foot diameter in the same months. The third year and all following years, apply three ounces of fertilizer in a four foot diameter.

Probably two most important considerations for successful growing of blueberries is first, proper selection of cultivars and site selection. Of course, like all fruit and vegetables producing plants, six to eight hours of sun is necessary. Secondly, be sure to not locate bushes near any hardwood trees because there will be a very low production of fruit, but the bushes are very compatible with pine trees.



'Emerald' blueberry.
Credit: James W. Olmstead,
UF/IFAS



'Windsor' blueberry.
Credit: Jeffrey G.
Williamson, UF/IFAS



'Springhigh' blueberry.
Credit: James W. Olmstead,
UF/IFAS



'Sweetcrisp' blueberry.
Credit: James W. Olmstead,
UF/IFAS

Plant Clinic Clatter

By R. Doherty, MGV



DEAR MASTER GARDENER: I planted blueberries and they've been growing well. Unfortunately, after the heavy rain we just had, I see what look like small, brown bullseyes on a few leaves. I've attached some photos in hopes you can identify what this is and what I can do to make sure my plants don't die.

DEAR HOMEOWNER: Thank you for sending photos of your blueberry plants' leaves. That helped identify what's known as "target spot" – since they look like a bullseye target. This is caused by the *Corynespora cassiicola* fungus and usually occurs from too much water or rainfall. Be sure to take action as soon as possible before the leaves start falling. Pruning these leaves off when spots are smaller may help deter the spread.

EDIS [publication PP348](#) states, "Environmental conditions such as humid weather, temperatures between 79°F–84°F, and moderate rainfall favor profuse fungal sporulation and rapid disease development. In the field, spores can be spread by wind or water splash (rain or irrigation). Limiting periods of leaf wetness and high humidity within the blueberry canopy also may help reduce disease severity and can be achieved by avoiding overhead irrigation, maintenance pruning to open canopies, and weed management in beds and row middles to increase air flow."

Unfortunately, there is no fungicide that can help with this specific fungus, however the one for [anthracnose](#) does help (Azoxystrobin (Abound), Cyprodinil + fludioxonil (Switch), and Pyraclostrobin + boscalid (Pristine)). Be sure to use as directed on the label and not spray more than twice sequentially with one fungicide. It's better to alternate usage of them so the fungus doesn't become resistant. Remember, fungi cells will spread with water. Be sure to dispose of any pruned/fallen leaves into the garbage and not a compost pile since this fungus will overwinter and come back in the spring.



Figure 8. Target spot symptoms.
Credit: P. Harmon, UF/IFAS

What's Cooking? Blueberry-Basil Limeade (no cooking required)

by Tamre Parsons, MGV

Here is something sunny for your summer.

Blueberries, tiny powerhouses of nutrition and antioxidants, contain fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K, manganese, and potassium. Healthline.com also states that blueberries are about 85% water. They add a lot of pow to some yummy recipes too.

It was tough to choose what to make given blueberries as the main ingredient. I found blueberry cheesecake (bake and no bake recipes), blueberry blintzes, baked challah, French toast, coleslaw with blueberries, blueberry sauce (to put on anything), blueberry-ricotta stuffed Ebelskivers (I don't even know what an Ebelskiver is), and blueberry cobbler or crisp.

I settled on a little sunshine.

Ingredients

1 cup sugar
3 springs fresh basil, plus basil leaves, for garnish
1 ½ cups fresh lime juice (from about 12 limes)
One 6 ounce container of blueberries

Optional: Gin for serving alcoholic drink

Blueberry-Basil Limeade Rated 4.9 of 5 stars 5 Reviews

Level: Easy

Active: 15 min

Total: 4 hr 45 min
(includes steeping and
chilling times)

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Directions

1. Place the sugar, basil sprigs, and 1 cup of water into a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring every so often, until the sugar has dissolved, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and let steep for 30 minutes.
2. Discard the basil and pour the syrup into a pitcher. Stir in the lime juice and 4 cups of cold water. Add the blueberries and chill for at least 4 hours or until ready to serve.
3. To serve, add ice to a rocks glass and garnish with basil leaves. To make into a cocktail, add ice to a rocks glass and top with 1 ½ ounces of gin. Top off with the limeade and garnish with basil.

For information about growing blueberries in Florida, search:

Publication #CIR1192

Date: 7/22/2018 Williamson, Jeffrey G.

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/MG359>

and

UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions Blueberries

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/>

[edibles/fruits/blueberries.html](https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/fruits/blueberries.html)

Recipe courtesy of Food Network Kitchen

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ree-drummond/blueberry-basil-limeade-11280754>



Treemendous: Blueberry Tree, Japanese Blueberry Tree, *Elaeocarpus decipiens*

BY: J. Daugherty, RHA

Relatively new to the industry in Florida, the blueberry tree is a nice addition to a wildlife landscape. This tree grows to a height and spread of 30 to 40 feet. With a range throughout USDA hardiness zones 8B-10B, this tree works across most of the state. Plant in full sun in a well-drained location. Also do not plant near sidewalk or driveway since the berries could cause staining of the pavement. Once established, this evergreen is highly drought tolerant. Remember to water until it is established which will take several months. This tree produces white flowers in the spring that attract pollinators, followed by berries that are great for wildlife.



About a year after planting, start annual, structural pruning to keep branches from crossing and to keep one, strong, central leader. Once the tree form is set, reduce pruning to as needed to keep the tree structurally sound. You can also do reduction pruning to maintain the shape and size of this tree. A reduction cut is a purposeful cut to lateral branch or a node (location of a branch or leaf). Attend one of my tree pruning talks to learn more about how to prune properly.

Discovery Gardens

Please plan a visit to over twenty different gardens located at 1951 Woodlea Road in Tavares. The hours are Monday through Friday and the third Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Just like your yard, Discovery Garden changes with the seasons and will reveal something new with each visit. Come see the changes in the garden.

Master Gardener Volunteer Plant Clinic

Bring your plant, insect, and soil problems to our Plant Clinic for advice Monday and Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The plant clinic is staffed by volunteers. Please call ahead at 352-343-4101 to be sure that someone is in the clinic to assist you with your question.

You may also send photos of your local problems to Jamielyn Daugherty at jdaugherty@ufl.edu or to the plant clinic at lakemg@ifas.ufl.edu.

Garden of the Months:



Wetlands Garden is an area that was created to demonstrate to the public the types of plants that can be grown by any body of water since Lake County does have an abundance of wet areas and lakes. Jan Malone, master gardener volunteer, has been lead of this garden since 2017 and can often be observed wading into the wetland and removing unwanted plants. Congratulations on being garden of the month.

Turf Walk shows ground covers such as perennial peanut, a versatile ground cover that can be planted statewide and blooms all summer long with yellow flowers. John Braun is the master gardener volunteer who has recently become lead and has worked hard to clean up this area and add new plantings to the area. Well done John.



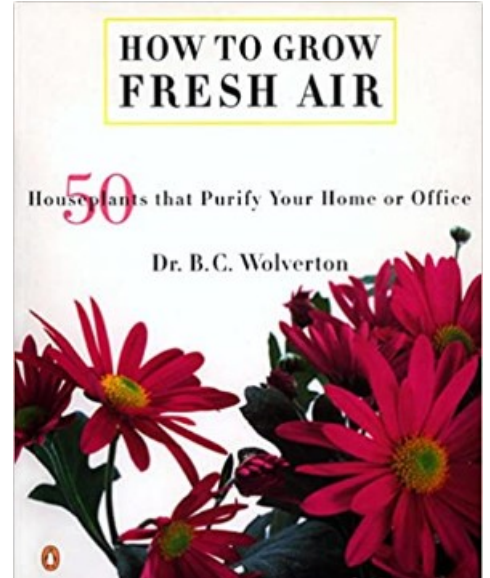
Book Review: How To Grow Fresh Air – 50 Houseplants That Purify Your Home or Office

BY: Regina Doherty, MGV

I recently attended a webinar, *Horticulture for the Health of It*, and this book (How to Grow Fresh Air) was highly recommended to learn about air purification by using plants. So, I got it from the library since I've written previous articles on houseplants and health.

The author states this book is “a culmination of more than 25 years of research.”

Because we spend about 90% of our time indoors, it's important for us to understand the importance of our indoor air quality (IAQ). Unfortunately, our homes aren't as air-pollutant-free as we might imagine because of with fossil fuels, aerosol cans, synthetic materials, and other carbon/toxic emitting sources. He discusses the latest statistics about air quality, *Bioeffluents* (human emissions), primary IAQ sources, and some plant and human biology. It's a great read!



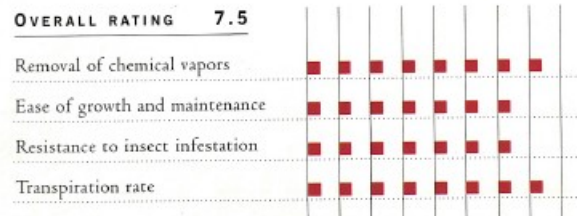
Sources of chemical emissions

	Formaldehyde	Xylene/toluene	Benzene	Trichloroethylene	Chloroform	Ammonia	Alcohols	Acetone
Adhesives	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Bioeffluents		✓				✓	✓	✓
Blueprint machines					✓			
Carpeting							✓	
Caulking compounds	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Ceiling tiles	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Paints and solvents				✓				

Fifty houseplants are rated based on how they each can purify your air, how/where to grow/care them, possible pests they attract, and transpiration rates.

Removal of the toxic gas formaldehyde by houseplants

Plant	µg per hour	Plant	µg per hour
Boston fern	2.4	Chinese evergreen	1.1
Florist's mum	1.8	Spider plant	1.0
Gerbera daisy	1.2	Banana	0.8
Dwarf date palm	0.9	Red emerald philodendron	0.7
Leafy Peperomia	0.6	Bunch grass (Pennisetum)	0.5



Peace Lily Rating

Sample of Tables

Houseplants for different lighting conditions

Common name	Botanical name	Common name	Botanical name
SEMI-SHADE			
Arrowhead vine	<i>Syngonium podophyllum</i>	Lacy tree philodendron	<i>Philodendron selloum</i>
Boston fern	<i>Nephtrolepis exaltata</i>	Lily turf	<i>Liriope spicata</i>
Chinese evergreen	<i>Aglaonema crispum</i>	Moth orchid	<i>Phalenopsis sp.</i>
Corn plant	<i>Dracaena fragrans</i>	Norfolk Island pine	<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>

Events

Fridays In the Garden

July 7, 2023, 12 – 1 pm Online Zoom

Join Seminole County agent Kaydie McCormik and Lake County Agent Jamie Daugherty as they cover growing an edible garden in this online class. The challenges of growing citrus.

Register online at <http://bit.ly/1frigarden>

Saturday In the Garden

July 15, 2023, 10am -12pm Lake County Extension Office, 1951 Woodlea Rd., Tavares, FL 32778

Join Diane Venetta, master gardener volunteer, to create your own dish garden to take home.

Cost includes all supplies to create your dish garden.

Cost: \$25 Register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/saturday-in-the-gardens-dish-garden-tickets-662299775457?aff=oddtcreator>

LIBRARY CLASSES

July 18, 2023, 12 – 1 pm

Trees and Hurricanes Free and no registration

Eustis Public Library

Trees are the largest plants in any landscape. It is important to care for them correctly from planting to old age. Learn about caring for trees in different life stages to keep them healthy and safe.

July 19, 2023, 2 – 3 pm

Succulents Free and no registration

Tavares Public Library

Learn how to grow and care for succulents.

July 19, 2023, 1 - 2 pm

Seed Planting (2 part program)

Cagan Crossing Library

Parents and children hear a presentation about planting seeds and then go to another location for a hands on activity of seed planting in an egg carton. Participants will be able to take home plantings.

July 20, 2023, 2-3 pm

Backyard Habitat Free and no registration

Marion Baysinger Memorial County Library

Learn how to create a habitat that provides resources for wildlife, from birds to butterflies and so much more.

An Equal Opportunity Institution. UF/IFAS Extension, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Andra Johnson, Dean. Single copies of UF/IFAS Extension publications (excluding 4-H and youth publications) are available free to Florida residents from county UF/IFAS Extension offices.