

# Blueberries

Blueberries are perennial flowering plants with indigo-colored berries from the section *Cyanococcus* within the genus *Vaccinium* (a genus that also includes cranberries, bilberries and grouseberries). Species in the section *Cyanococcus* are the most common fruits sold as "blueberries" and are native to North America (commercially cultivated highbush blueberries were not introduced into Europe until the 1930s).

Blueberries are usually erect, prostrate shrubs that can vary in size from 3.9 in. to 13 ft. in height. In the commercial production of blueberries, the smaller species are known as "low-bush blueberries" (synonymous with "wild"), while the larger species are known as "high-bush blueberries".



The leaves can be either deciduous or evergreen, ovate to lanceolate, and 0.39–3.15 in. long and 0.20–1.38 in. broad. The flowers are bell-shaped, white, pale pink or red, sometimes tinged greenish. The fruit is a berry 0.20–0.63 in. in diameter with a flared crown at the end; they are pale greenish at first, then reddish-purple, and finally dark purple when ripe. They have a sweet taste when mature, with variable acidity. Blueberry bushes typically bear fruit in the middle of the growing season: fruiting times are affected by local conditions such as altitude and latitude, so the peak of the crop can vary from May to August (in the northern hemisphere) depending upon these conditions.