

# Blueberry Planting and Care Guide



## Planting Guide

1. Choose a spot with full sun that you have access to water. The blueberry plants will need to be watered frequently throughout the season.
2. You'll want to plant the plants 4 feet apart if planting in a line. If planting in multiple rows, leave 7 to 10 feet between the rows so you will be able to walk in between once the plants are mature.
3. Blueberries prefer acidic soil. In Minnesota generally our soil is not acidic enough for blueberries. Consider amending your soil before planting with sulfur, pine needles, peat moss, or other soil acidifier.
4. Dig a hole a foot to 18 inches deep and twice as wide. (Blueberry roots will not go very deep but will spread out laterally.)
5. Break up the root ball. You can do this with your hands by pulling apart the roots. The plant root balls can be quite tightly packed in the pot. You may need pruning shears to cut the root ball apart.
6. Plant at the level of the soil in the pot. (At planting is also a time you can add a soil acidifier such as peat moss to the soil. You can mix it into the soil you are backfilling around the blueberry plants.)
7. Make sure to really pack the soil around the plant as you backfill the hole. Stomp on it with your feet even.
8. Mulch the blueberries (optional). Blueberry plants love mulch. It provides organic matter to the soil, keeps their shallow roots cool, helps keep down weeds, and conserves moisture in the soil. Woodchips or pine needles work well for mulch.
9. Water the plants immediately after planting.
10. Blueberry plants don't compete well with weeds, especially grass. If you are planting into sod consider putting down a piece of landscape fabric or cardboard around the plant for a couple years to kill the sod. You can then remove the fabric and put woodchip mulch down if you like.

## Caring for Your Blueberry Plant(s)

1. Blueberry plants have a shallow root system. They will need to be watered often, especially the first year. They need 1" of water per week and during fruit development a couple inches of water per week is ideal. If your blueberry plant

does not seem to be growing much, the first thing I would try is to give it more consistent water.

2. Blueberries benefit from fertilizer each year. We put one cup per plant for the first couple years and then two cups starting in year 3 of an organic fertilizer with 8% nitrogen. Nitrogen is the most important nutrient when fertilizing blueberries.
3. Especially during winter, rabbits will mow down blueberry plants to the snow level, so you'll want to protect the plants from rabbits with chicken wire or some other fencing.
4. Deer do not prefer blueberry plants, but will occasionally nibble the edge of the branches in winter.
5. Birds love blueberries. If you have problems with birds eating your berries, you may need to use bird netting to protect the berries once they start to ripen.
6. We remove the flowers the year of planting and the second year to let the plant put all its energy into growing new shoots and getting bigger. That has worked very well for us in getting our plants established. If you'd really like to have some fruit next year, I would recommend at least stripping off the flowers this year.