

July Produce Spotlight: Blueberries



Photo by Amanda Wilkins

Planting window

Harvest window

Planting window



Recommended Tomato Varieties for North Carolina

Rabbiteye: 'Climax,' 'Premier,' 'Tifblue,' 'Powderblue,' 'Centurion'

Highbush: 'Blue Ridge' (southern highbush), 'O'Neal' (southern highbush), 'Legacy' (southern highbush)

General Care

Light: Plant in location with between 4-8 hours of sunlight each day.

Soil: Plant in well-draining soil. Add compost to improve soil structure and nutrient holding capacity. Use a soil test to determine what amendments are needed for growing blueberries.

Spacing: Space plants 4-5' apart.

Pruning: Prune December to the end of February to improve the structure and fruiting canes of the shrubs.



Top Growing Tips

1. Blueberries like a soil pH of 4.5 to 5.3. Test your soil annually for the first three years and then every other year afterwards. Add wettable sulfur as directed by the soil test!
2. Mulch with leaves or other organic matter to improve soil water retention.
3. Make sure to irrigate at times when there is no rain as the fruits are swelling!
4. Protect fruits from hungry birds!



Common Diseases & Pests

Pests: Scale insects, gall midge, flower thrips, plum curculio, cranberry fruitworm, cherry fruitworm, spotted-wing drosophila, blueberry maggot, blueberry bud mite, Japanese beetles, Red humped and yellow necked caterpillars, blueberry flea beetle

Diseases: Exobasidium leaf and fruit spot, twig blight, mummy berry, flower blight, fruit rot

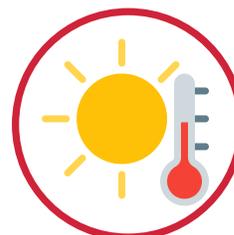
Management

Plant healthy, strong plants; Choose trialed varieties; Monitor plants for pests and diseases often; Interplant with other plants in a home garden setting; Allow for good air movement; Maintain optimum plant health and soil pH



10-25 LBS.
PER
HEALTHY
PLANT

Warm or Cool Season Crop?



Warm



Cool

Does this plant grow well in a container?



Yes!



Fair



Not Well

July Pollinator Pairings: Blueberry Bees

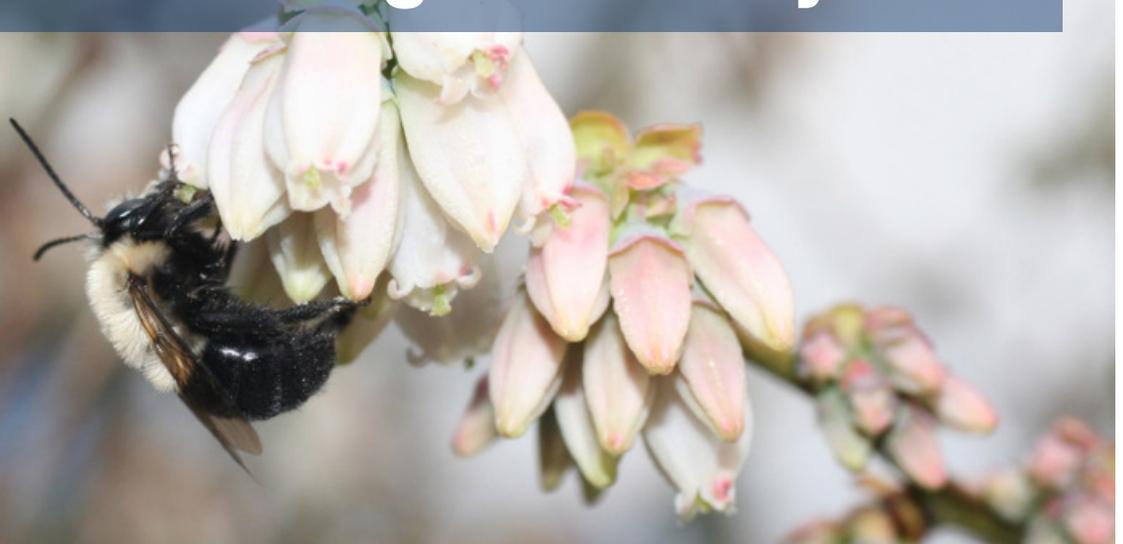


Photo: Dr. Hannah Burrack; <https://entomology.ces.ncsu.edu/small-fruit-insect-biology-management/blueberry-pollinators/>

Active Season



What do I look like?

Blueberry bees are in the genus *Habropoda*, the Digger Bees. The southeastern blueberry bee, *H. laboriosa*, look like small worker bumble bees, but they do not have pollen baskets on their lower legs. Also, the males have a yellow patch on their heads.

Where do I live?

I nest in small colonies and I can build my home under the ground in rodent burrows and above ground in birdhouses, wall voids, old mouse nests, or under grass tussocks. I prefer sandier soils.

My colony dies out at the end of the season, and only mated queens overwinter to start a new colony again in the spring.

What are my favorite flowers?

Blueberries and other tubular flowers. I will visit other types of flowers, as well! I am especially active in the spring, so I visit those flowers more.

How well does this pollinator pollinate other fruit and vegetable crops?



Well



Fair

How can you help me?

You can plant more flowering plants, and different types of plants that flower throughout the year. You can leave abandoned rodent nests or burrows beneath old tree stumps for queens to nest. Reduce tilling and soil disturbance in areas you don't need to! Don't spray insecticides when bees are active and make sure they do not have residual effects.

How do I pair with the produce in the spotlight?

I use buzz pollination that is important for blueberries to drop or release their pollen. I carry the pollen from one flower to the next, which helps new blueberries form! The more I work, the more blueberries you get!

LEARN MORE ABOUT NATIVE BEES TO NC HERE!

