

Information On This Week's Product

BC BLUEBERRIES

They are small wonders...sweet, juicy, colourful and healthy for you. South Alder Farms in Aldergrove has supplied the blueberries for our Program. Each student should receive 1/4 cup or approximately 20 blueberries per serving. There are 14 servings in each "clamshell" package.



Please rinse the berries before serving.

AT A GLANCE:

- BC is a TOP international producer of blueberries
- Blueberries are a Super-Food containing more disease-fighting antioxidants than any other fruit or vegetable
- Blueberries are a North American original



WHERE ARE THEY GROWN?

Blueberry farms are found mainly in the Lower Mainland. There are a few farms in the Okanagan area and Vancouver Island. In BC we grow mainly the Duke, Reka, Patriot, Blue Crop, Brigitta, Liberty and Elliott varieties of blueberries. The blueberries are grown on "high-bush" shrubs which can reach 2 meters. We are lucky to enjoy almost 3 full months of fresh blueberries.

HOW MUCH IS PRODUCED?

Canadian blueberries (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) are the largest fruit crop produced nationally, occupying more than half of all Canadian fruit acreage. With over 650 growers, British Columbia is the largest Canadian producer of blueberries and is one of the most productive growing regions in the world (29 million kg and over \$100 million in revenues in 2008).

Weeks of Availability		July				August				September		
Variety Tasting Notes:		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Duke	Large Berry Light Blue Very Firm Mild Flavor	■	■	■								
Reka	Medium Berry Dark Blue Excellent Flavor		■	■	■							
Patriot	Large Berry Medium Blue Slightly Flat Good Flavor			■	■							
Bluecrop	Large Berry Light Blue Firm Flavorful			■	■	■	■					
Brigitta	Med to Large Berry Firm and crisp Sweet with touch of tart					■	■	■	■			
Elliott	Medium Berry Light Blue Firm, Tart						■	■	■	■	■	



Sharing the Goodness— From Close to Home

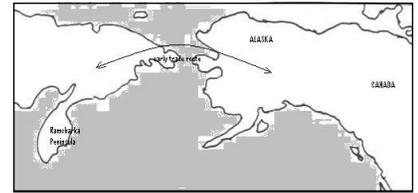
HEALTH BENEFITS



Blueberries ranked among the highest for their antioxidant properties in tests of over 100 other foods. Being one of the best sources of antioxidants blueberries can help slow the aging process and reduce the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease and loss of brain function. Blueberries also contain condensed tannins that help prevent urinary tract infections and anthocyanin—a natural compound linked to reducing eyestrain. Blueberries are rich in Vitamin A, B1, B2, C, niacin and the minerals calcium, phosphorus, potassium, and iron. Because of all these benefits, blueberries have recently been elevated to **"Super Food"** status. The world's appetite for blueberries is growing!

HISTORICAL NOTES

Blueberries form on a low growing shrub native to North America. For centuries blueberries were picked by Aboriginal people as an important source of food and medicine. In the Arctic they were an important part of the Inuit diet. It is interesting to note that a related variety has been found growing on the Russian Kamchatka Peninsula where it was probably introduced by Inuit traders. In 1605 the French explorer Samuel Champlain noted that the Hurons pressed and dried blueberries into cakes for later use but also ate them raw and made a type of flour with them.



Tea from the leaves was thought to be good for the blood and the juice was effective for treating coughs. The roots were brewed to make a tea used to relax pregnant women. The juice was also used as a dye for baskets and cloth. Blueberries were sun-dried and ground into a powder to preserve them for winter months. The sun-dried berries were then mixed with a ground corn meal mush (a corn pudding) and honey.



Ms E Coleman White

The development of the commercial "high-bush" varieties as we see today did not come about until the early 1900's. Ms. Elizabeth Coleman White, a feisty first daughter of a cranberry farmer from New Jersey, took an interest in working the land between the cranberry bogs where the wild blue berries grew. White researched the fields within a 20-mile radius of her home and located the choicest blueberry shrubs. She then catalogued the endless varieties of wild blueberries but was unsuccessful in cultivating them. Yet she did not give up.



Dr F Conville

In 1911 White read a research article from Dr. Frederick Conville, a botanist from Arkansas. Convinced her father to finance the research, she invited Conville to their farm to study. Conville applied his scientific knowledge of other native plants, such as the Huckleberry, and other techniques necessary to propagate and hybridize fruit. In a few short years this partnership bore fruit. In 1916 the first plump berries were sold from the upright blueberry plants. Her father was well pleased as not only did he now have an earlier July harvested berry crop to sell (before the September cranberries) but he also became the world's first supplier of "high-bush" blueberry shrubs.

FOLKLORE

The blossom end of each berry, the calyx, forms the shape of a perfect five-pointed star. The aboriginal elders would tell of how the Great Spirit sent "star berries" to relieve the children's hunger during the winter's famine.

“ *Nature has bestowed on British Columbia the optimum climate and growing conditions for producing one of her most delicious, distinctive and versatile fruits: BC Blueberries* ”

