Highbush Blueberry Varieties for Michigan

Site Selection

The range of the highbush blueberry is restricted to the area south of a line extending from Muskegon to the lower end of Saginaw Bay. It does not do well north of this line because it needs a growing season of 160 days and is badly injured by winter temperatures of -20 to -25°F (-29° to -32°C). The "halfhigh" types, Northland and Patriot, are often successful in the northern regions, but they should be tested before extensive plantings are made.

Blueberries grow best on loose textured soils, but heavier soils are adequate. The soil should be high in organic matter and very acid with a pH from 4.0 to 5.1. Complete information on the culture of blueberries can be found in Extension Bulletin E-564 "Hints on Growing Blueberries," free.

Variety Selection

Be careful to obtain varieties that are adapted to Michigan conditions. Take into consideration where the varieties were bred and tested. When possible, find out from other growers in your climatic area which varieties have performed best for them. It is worthwhile to start a small test planting of several varieties before you plant on a large scale.

You will want to take several characteristics into consideration when you select your variety: 1) picking season, 2) yield, 3) fruit quality, 4) hardiness, 5) harvesting ease, 6) amount of pruning required, and 7) disease resistance. These traits are listed in Tables 1, 2 and Chart 1.

Varieties acceptable for mechanical harvesting on a commercial scale are: Bluecrop, Bluejay, Burlington, Collins, Coville, Elliot, Jersey, Lateblue, Patriot, Rubel and Spartan. Varieties adequate for "U-Pick" marketing are: Berkeley, Bluecrop, Bluejay, Blueray, Burlington, Collins, Coville, Elliot, Jersey, Lateblue, Northland, Patriot, Rubel and Spartan.

Planting Stock

Buy inspected plants which have a State Certificate of Inspection. Plant 2-year-old plants if you can obtain them. Three-year-old plants are satisfactory, but can cost more. If you do plant stock older than 3 years, make sure they were not culls which were too weak to sell as 2- or 3-year-olds. Most commercial growers plant 2-year-old plants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Yield in Michigan</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Scar</th>
<th>Firmness</th>
<th>Flavor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>Midseason</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>large, dry</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>fair, low acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluecrop</td>
<td>Midseason</td>
<td>moderate to high</td>
<td>medium to to large</td>
<td>bright blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>very firm</td>
<td>good, tart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluehaven</td>
<td>Early midseason</td>
<td>low to moderate to high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluejay</td>
<td>Early midseason</td>
<td>moderate to high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>very firm</td>
<td>mild, slightly tart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluejay</td>
<td>Midseason</td>
<td>moderate to high</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>dark blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluetta</td>
<td>Very early</td>
<td>erratic; moderate to high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>Late</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>good</td>
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<td>light blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>very large</td>
<td>medium blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>good, tart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Late</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>medium</td>
<td>medium blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>small-medium</td>
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<td>small</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>good</td>
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<td>medium</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>very firm</td>
<td>good</td>
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<td>medium</td>
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<td>good</td>
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<td>light blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
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<td>moderate</td>
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<td>dark blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>fair, tart</td>
</tr>
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<td>medium</td>
<td>medium blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>fair</td>
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<td>Early midseason</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
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<td>fair</td>
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<td>large</td>
<td>medium blue</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>excellent</td>
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<td>Rancocas</td>
<td>Midseason</td>
<td>moderate to high</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>dark blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>firm, can crack</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubel</td>
<td>Midseason</td>
<td>moderate to high</td>
<td>small to medium</td>
<td>medium blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spartan</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>firm</td>
<td>excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>Very early</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>medium to small</td>
<td>dark blue</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>soft</td>
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TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMON BLUEBERRY VARIETIES IN MICHIGAN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>Growth habit</th>
<th>Hardiness</th>
<th>Propagation ease</th>
<th>Amount of pruning</th>
<th>Disease resistance</th>
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<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>upright, bushy</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>susceptible to mummyberry and phomopsis canker; resistant to powdery mildew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluecrop</td>
<td>upright, open</td>
<td>hardy</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>moderately resistant to mummyberry, powdery mildew and red ringspot; very resistant to shoestring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluehaven</td>
<td>low, bushy</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>susceptible to mummyberry and phomopsis canker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluejay</td>
<td>upright, open</td>
<td>hardy</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to mummyberry and phomopsis canker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluejay</td>
<td>upright, open</td>
<td>very hardy</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>susceptible to mummyberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluette</td>
<td>low, bushy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>susceptible to mummyberry; resistant to mummyberry; susceptible to shoestring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>upright, bushy</td>
<td>very hardy</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to mummyberry, powdery mildew, fusicoccum canker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collins</td>
<td>moderately upright</td>
<td>hardy</td>
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<td>moderate</td>
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<td>limited</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to powdery mildew, susceptible to shoestring, mummyberry, phomopsis canker</td>
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<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to mummyberry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elfrblue</td>
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<td>moderate</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to mummyberry, susceptible to shoestring</td>
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<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to mummyberry, susceptible to shoestring</td>
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<td>Elliot</td>
<td>upright, bushy</td>
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<td>moderate</td>
<td>susceptible to mummyberry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herbert</td>
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<td>very hardy</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>moderately resistant to mummyberry</td>
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<td>Jersey</td>
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<td>intermediate</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>moderately resistant to mummyberry, red ringspot; susceptible to shoestring</td>
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<td>Lateblue</td>
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<td>intermediate</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to mummyberry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meader</td>
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<td>hardy</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>moderately resistant to mummyberry and shoestring; resistant to fusicoccum canker, and powdery mildew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northland</td>
<td>low, bushy</td>
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<td>easy</td>
<td>heavy</td>
<td>resistant to shoestring; susceptible to mummyberry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patriot</td>
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<td>very hardy</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>resistant to phytophthora root rot</td>
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<td>Rubel</td>
<td>upright, open</td>
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<td>easy</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>susceptible to mummyberry, necrotic ringspot, mosaic and shoestring; moderately resistant to fusicoccum canker</td>
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<td>Variety</td>
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<td>Second week</td>
<td>Third week</td>
<td>Fourth week</td>
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<td>Elliot</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CHART 1. FRUITING SEASON OF COMMON HIGHBUSH VARIETIES.

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