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Highbush Blueberry Varieties

Michigan State University

Cooperative Extension Service

Jim Hancock, Department of Horticulture, Michigan State University

Jim Siefker, Department of Horticulture, Michigan State University

John Nelson, Michigan Blueberry Growers Association

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# Highbush Blueberry Varieties

## for Michigan

**Jim Hancock and Jim Siefker**  
Department of Horticulture  
Michigan State University

**John Nelson**  
Michigan Blueberry Growers Association

### 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  $-25^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-29^{\circ}$  to  $-32^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). 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.

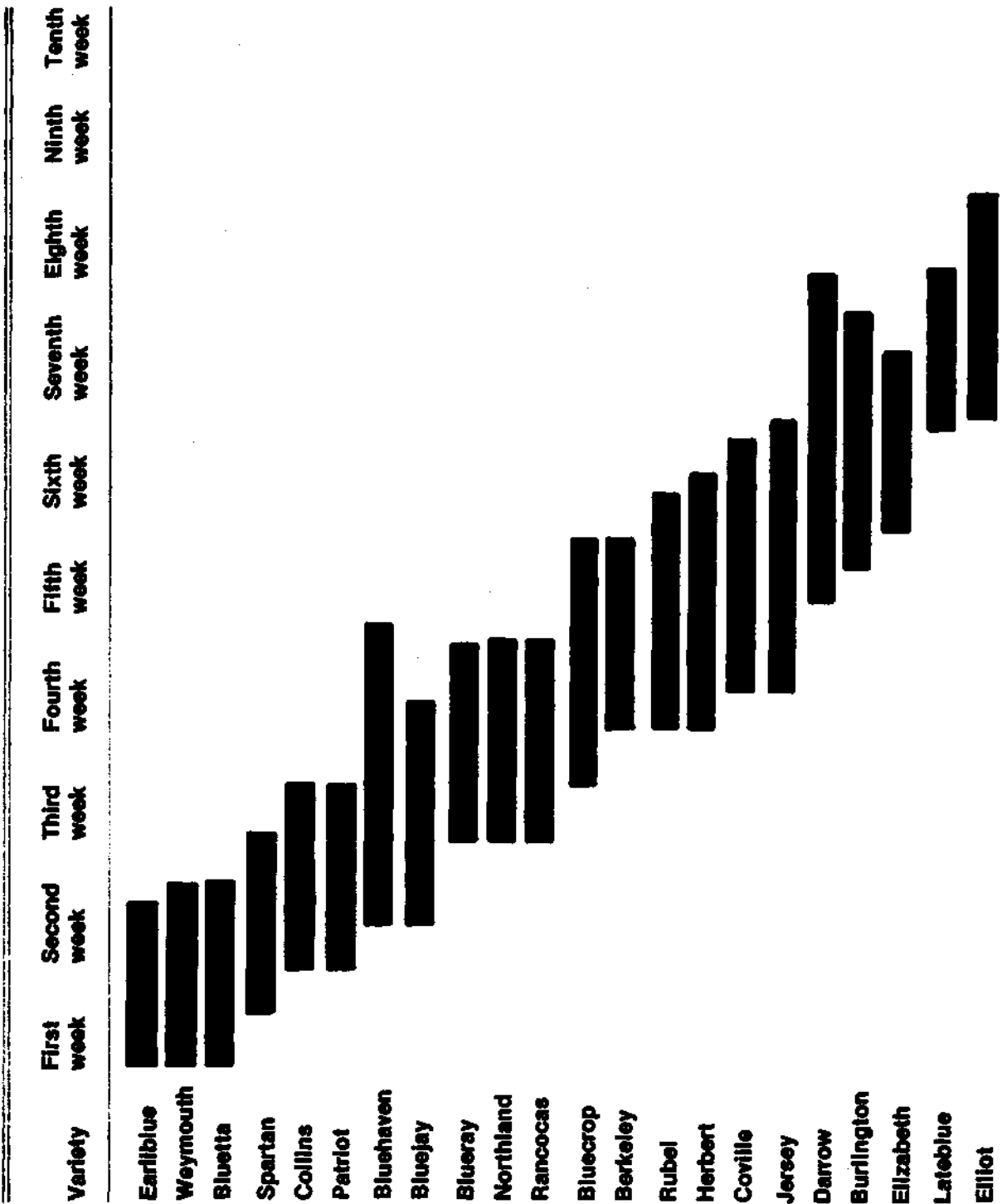
**TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMON BLUEBERRY VARIETIES IN MICHIGAN.**

Cultivar	Season	Yield in Michigan	FRUIT QUALITY				
			Size	Color	Scar	Firmness	Flavor
Berkeley	Midseason	moderate	large	light blue	large, dry	firm	fair, low acid
Bluecrop	Midseason	moderate to to high	medium to to large	bright blue	small	very firm	good, tart
Bluehaven	Early midseason	low to moderate	medium	light blue	small	firm	fair
Bluejay	Early midseason	moderate to high	medium	light blue	small	very firm	mild, slightly tart
Blueray	Midseason	moderate to high	large	dark blue	medium	firm	good
Bluetta	Very early	erratic; moderate to high	medium	medium blue	medium	medium	fair
Burlington	Late	high	medium	light blue	small	firm	good
Collins	Early midseason	moderate	large	light blue	small	firm	good
Coville	Late midseason	moderate	very large	medium blue	medium	firm	good, tart
Darrow	Late	low	large	light blue	small	firm	excellent
Earliblue	Very early	low to moderate	medium	medium blue	medium	medium	good
Elizabeth	Late	low to moderate	small-medium	medium blue	small	firm	good
Elliot	Very late	very high	medium	light blue	small	very firm	good
Herbert	Midseason	moderate	large	dark blue	medium	medium	good
Jersey	Late midseason	moderate to high	medium	light blue	medium	firm	fair
Lateblue	Very late	moderate	medium to large	dark blue	medium	firm	fair, tart
Meader	Midseason	low to moderate	medium	medium blue	small	firm	fair
Northland	Early midseason	very high	medium	medium blue	medium	soft	fair
Patriot	Early midseason	high	large	medium blue	small	firm	excellent
Rancocas	Midseason	moderate to high	small	dark blue	medium	firm, can crack	good
Rubel	Midseason	moderate to high	small to medium	medium blue	medium	firm	fair
Spartan	Early	high	large	light blue	medium	firm	excellent
Weymouth	Very early	moderate	medium to small	dark blue	medium	soft	poor

**TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMON BLUEBERRY VARIETIES IN MICHIGAN.**

Cultivar	Growth habit	Hardiness	Propagation ease	Amount of pruning	Disease resistance
Berkeley	upright, bushy	limited	easy	moderate	susceptible to mummyberry and phomopsis canker; resistant to powdery mildew
Bluecrop	upright, open	hardy	difficult	moderate	moderately resistant to mummyberry, powdery mildew and red ringspot; very resistant to shoestring
Bluehaven	low, bushy	limited	intermediate	moderate	susceptible to mummyberry and phomopsis canker
Bluejay	upright, open	hardy	easy	moderate	resistant to shoestring; moderately resistant to mummyberry
Blueray	upright, open	very hardy	easy	moderate	susceptible to mummyberry
Bluetta	low, bushy	moderate	easy	moderate	susceptible to mummyberry
Burlington	upright, bushy	very hardy	easy	moderate	resistant to mummyberry; susceptible to shoestring
Collins	moderately upright	hardy	easy	moderate	susceptible to mummyberry
Coville	upright, open	limited	easy	moderate	moderately resistant to mummyberry, powdery mildew, fusicoocum canker
Darrow	low, bushy	limited	intermediate	moderate	resistant to mummyberry and shoestring
Earliblue	upright, bushy	moderate	easy	moderate	resistant to powdery mildew, susceptible to shoestring, mummyberry, phomopsis canker
Elizabeth	moderately upright	hardy	intermediate	moderate	
Elliot	upright, bushy	hardy	easy	moderate	resistant to mummyberry, susceptible to shoestring
Herbert	upright, open	very hardy	easy	moderate	moderately resistant to mummyberry
Jersey	upright, bushy	hardy	intermediate	moderate	moderately resistant to mummyberry, red ringspot; susceptible to shoestring
Lateblue	upright, open	very hardy	intermediate	moderate	resistant to mummyberry
Meador	moderately upright, open	hardy	intermediate	moderate	
Northland	low, bushy	very hardy	easy	heavy	resistant to shoestring; susceptible to mummyberry
Patriot	moderately upright, open	very hardy	easy	moderate	resistant to phytophthora root rot
Rancocas	moderately upright, bushy	very hardy	easy	moderate to heavy	moderately susceptible to mummyberry and shoestring; resistant to fusicoocum canker, and powdery mildew
Rubel	upright, open	hardy	easy	moderate	susceptible to mummyberry, necrotic ringspot, mosaic and shoestring; moderately resistant to fusicoocum canker
Spartan	upright, open	hardy	easy	moderate	moderately resistant to mummyberry; susceptible to shoestring
Weymouth	low, bushy	hardy	easy	moderate	susceptible to mummyberry and shoestring

**CHART 1. FRUITING SEASON OF COMMON HIGHBUSH VARIETIES.**



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