

## Renfrow Hardware

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# Blueberries

Blueberries are very well suited to growing in the Charlotte area. They are **healthy** foods that are delicious both fresh and frozen. They generally have **no pest problems (aside from birds)** and do not require any pruning or spraying.\* Harvest time is roughly June-August. There are early, mid, and late season varieties. The average family plants at least four bushes.

**Variety Selection:** Variety selection is very important for blueberries, as there are many different types and the varieties that grow in Maine, in the NC mountains, or on the coast are most likely unsuitable for our NC Piedmont region. All of the varieties that Renfrow's offers are self-pollinating **rabbiteyes**, which consistently do the best around here. "Self-pollinating" means that one plant will produce fruit on its own. *However* if you are looking to enjoy lots of blueberries the magic number is three bushes - one each of three different rabbiteye varieties. Choosing three different ones helps the plants to pollinate each other more thoroughly, increasing yields. It also broadens your harvest window as you can select early-season, mid-season, and late-season fruiting varieties. Our shipment arrives in October and the best timeframe to plant fruit is in the fall and winter months so that the plants have time to establish their roots before the heat of summer hits.

**Site Selection:** As with most food crops, full sun is ideal, but blueberries actually will crop in a bit of partial shade, though with slightly reduced yields. Space your plants about 5 feet apart and they will eventually get about head high and will begin cropping after their second or third year, and every year thereafter. Plant your blueberries a little "high" in a bed or on sloping ground. Dig the hole one inch shallower than the pot size. Blueberries do not like having wet feet so do not plant in a low spot or where temporary flooding occurs.

**Care:** Treat blueberry bushes like you do azaleas - use organic acid fertilizer and *never* lime them. We carry a product called Holly-Tone that is great for blueberries, azaleas, and evergreens. Mulch their bed with leaves each fall.

**\*One exception to the no-spray generalization:** If you have a problem with cankerworms in your yard in early spring, spray the foliage with organic pesticide *bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) so that the cankerworms do not decimate the foliage and weaken the plant. Cankerworms absolutely LOVE blueberry foliage.

## Renfrow's Rabbiteye Blueberry Varieties

Early-Season <i>mid-June</i>	Mid-Season <i>late June-mid July</i>	Late-Season <i>mid-late July</i>
Climax	Brightwell Premier	Delite Tifblue