Blueberry Production for Small Farms

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Blueberry Production for Small Farms

• Marketing
• Horticultural Requirements
• Pest Management
• Resources
Marketing

• Fresh Market
  – Local
    • Food Service
    • Local Chains
    • U-Pick
    • Farmer’s Markets
  – Shipper
Marketing

• Processing
  – Frozen
• Value added
  – Preserves
  – Wine
BLUEBERRY WINE

Growers hope study gives sales a boost

BY ERIC PERA
Associated Press

Blueberry wine may be the Rodney Dangerfield of the vintner arts, but it has gained a measure of respect from food scientists at the University of Florida.

In a recent report certain to give oenophiles pause, researchers with U.F.'s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences tout blueberry wine as higher in heart-healthy antioxidants than the vast majority of wines made from grapes.

That's good news for blueberry growers like C. Joseph Keel, president and CEO of Keel and Curley Winery in Plant City, which last year sold 300,000 bottles of blueberry wine, mostly through Publix Super Markets locations in Florida.

Keel, an Irish-American who farms 30 acres of blueberries, has seen a steady increase in sales in the nine years he's commercially bottled wine made from slightly damaged berries too blemished to sell for the fresh market.

Like other growers around the country used to discarding damaged berries, Keel discovered he still could profit off the fruit by making wine.
Welcome to Island Grove Wine Company. We specialize in fine blueberry wines using the freshest blueberries from our own Florida plantations.

The winery is located in North Central Florida, southeast of Gainesville in Alachua County. For decades, Alachua County has been the heart of Florida blueberry production and remains so today producing 25% of the entire state's production of this flavorful fruit.

Our blueberry wines are made from 100% blueberries with no grape juice or flavorings used and are very low in sulfites. We also produce several tantalizing fruit wine blends to appeal to any occasion.

Winery Origin

Island Grove Ag Products is a major supplier of Florida fresh blueberries in the March to May window. The process of delivering Grade “A” quality to markets requires sorting out good fruits with minor blemishes.
Horticultural Requirements

• Types
  – Southern highbush
  – Rabbiteye
Rabbiteye Blueberry

• On suitable blueberry soils in north and north central Florida, rabbiteye blueberries are more vigorous, longer lived, and easier to care for than most southern highbush varieties. They are more drought tolerant than southern highbush blueberries and can grow satisfactorily in soils which are lower in organic matter. Currently, commercial rabbiteye blueberry production is not recommended for areas with winter temperatures milder than in Ocala because of the possibility of inadequate chilling.

HS967
Southern Highbush Blueberry

- Southern highbush blueberries were developed by crossing northern highbush varieties from Michigan and New Jersey with wild blueberries native in Florida and other southeastern states. The first three southern highbush varieties were released from the University of Florida in the mid 1970s. Since then, many newer and improved southern highbush varieties have been released. 

HS967
Horticultural Requirements

• Types
  – Southern highbush
  – Rabbiteye

• Chill
Chilling Hours

• Hours of 32-45 deg. F during dormant period

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG374
Blueberry Physiological Requirements

• Chilling
  a. Hours between 32 & 45 deg. F
  b. Low (250 – 350)
  c. High (400 & UP)
Horticultural Requirements

• Types
• Chill

• Cross Pollination
  – Different Cultivars that flower at similar times (not S. highbush and rabbiteye)
Horticultural Requirements

• Types
• Chill
• Cross Pollination
  – Different Cultivars that flower at similar times (not S. highbush and rabbiteye)
• Soil/Medium
Soil/Growing Medium

- Well drained
- Soil chemistry
  a. pH 4.0 – 5.5
  b. Organic matter 3-4%
- Pine Bark Culture
- Containers
Pine Bark Culture
Horticultural Requirements

• Types
• Chill
• Cross Pollination
  – Different Cultivars that flower at similar times (not S. highbush and rabbiteye)
• Soil/Medium
• Fertility
Fertility

• Nutrition
  a. pH
  b. Young plants:
     - 1 oz. 12-4-8-2 every 3 wks.
     3/15-11/1
     - 1 oz. 12-4-8-2 every 6 wks.
     11/1-3/15
  c. Foliar feeding & micronutrients
  d. Tissue analysis
Horticultural Requirements

- Types
- Chill
- Cross Pollination
  - Different Cultivars that flower at similar times (not S. highbush and rabbiteye)
- Soil/Medium
- Fertility
- **Irrigation**
Blueberry Irrigation

- Highest use
  - Warm dry spring with developing fruit and leaves app. 0.25-0.3 acre inches per day
  - Hot dry summer

- Overhead
- Drip
- Microsprinklers
Horticultural Requirements Cont.

- Pruning
Blueberry Pruning

• Hedging after harvest
• Cane pruning
• Dormant pruning
Horticultural Requirements Cont.

- Pruning
- **Cultivars**
Blueberry Cultivars for Central Florida

**Southern Highbush**
- Emerald
- Jewell
- Snowchaser
- Springhigh
- Windsor???
- Sharpblue
- Gulfcoast
- **Kestrel**
- **Flicker**

**Rabbiteye??**
- Brightwell
- Chaucer
- Woodard
- Beckyblue
Pests

• Weeds
  a. Mulch
  b. Herbicides
  c. Row middles – herbicides/mow
Pests

• Diseases
  a. Phytophthora
  b. Leafspots
  c. Boytritis flower blight
  d. Stem die back
Pests

- Insects
  a. Flower thrips
  b. Cranberry fruit worm
  c. Bud mites
  d. Blueberry gall midge
  e. Spotted winged *Drosophila*
  f. Flea beetle
Pests

• Birds
  a. Cedar waxwing
Florida Blueberry Integrated Pest Management Guide

Jeffrey G. Williamson, Philip F. Harmon and Oscar E. Liburd

This publication was adapted for Florida from the Southeast Regional Blueberry Integrated Management Guide, available here: http://www.smallfruits.org/SmallFruitsRegGuide/Guides/2006/12Jan06BlueberrySprayGuide.pdf. Thus, major contributions were made by the original editors: Gerard Kremer, Phil Brannen, Mark Czarnota, Dan Horton, Paul Guillebeau, and Paul Sumner (University of Georgia); Bill Cline (North Carolina State University); Frank Hale and David Lockwood (University of Tennessee); Hannah Barrack, Katie Jennings, Wayne Mitchem and David Monks (North Carolina State University); and Powell Smith and Bob Bellinger (Clemson University).

Additional contributions by: Allen Straw (Virginia Tech University); Scott Nesmith (University of Georgia); John Meyer (North Carolina State University); Steve Bost (University of Tennessee); Harald Scherm (University of Georgia); and Blair Sampson (USDA/ARS Small Fruit Res. Station, Poplarville, MS).

Recommendations are based on information from the manufacturer’s label and performance data from research and extension field tests.

Because environmental conditions and grower application methods vary widely, suggested use does not imply that performance of the pesticide will always conform to the safety and pest control standards indicated by experimental data.

This publication is intended for use only as a guide. Specific rates and applications methods are on the pesticide label, and these are subject to change at any time. Always refer to and read the pesticide label before making any application! The pesticide label supersedes any information contained in this guide, and it is the legal document referenced for application standards.
Resources
Welcome to Fruitscapes

FRUITSCAPE is the source for information on temperate, subtropical, and tropical fruit crops in the Florida home landscape.

Fruit trees are a wonderful way to enhance the beauty and value of your landscape. They provide nutritious food to eat and share with friends, neighbors, and wildlife. They provide shade, and are aesthetically pleasing.

Please visit our website as it is updated periodically with information on the planting and care of fruit trees in the Florida home landscape.

Visit Us Online:
http://fruitscapes.ifas.ufl.edu
or
www.fruitscapes.info
Blueberry

Subtopics

- Blueberry Pest Management
- Blueberry Products

Publications

- Alternative Opportunities for Small Farms: Blueberry Production Review
- Blueberry Gardener's Guide
- Blueberry Varieties for Florida
- Florida's Commercial Blueberry Industry
- Microirrigation of Young Blueberries in Florida
- New Plants for Florida: Blueberry
- Protecting Blueberries from Freezes in Florida
- Pruning Blueberry Plants in Florida
- Reproductive Growth and Development of Blueberry
- Water Use in Establishment of Young Blueberry Plants

Additional IFAS Sites

- College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
- IFAS Extension: Solutions for Your Life
- IFAS Research
Some Blueberry Nurseries

• Island Grove Ag Products
  – http://www.islandgroveagproducts.com/

• True Blue Plants
  – http://www.trueblueplants.com/

• Pine Island Nursery
  – http://www.tropicalfruitnursery.com/

• Chestnut Hill Nursery
  – http://www.chestnuthilltreefarm.com/?gclid=CNKinMzSwaCFa1d7AodtzloAQ
Other Blueberry Resources

• Fertilizing Blueberries in Pine Bark Beds
  http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/B%201291_2.PDF

• Blueberries for Growers, Gardeners and Promoters by:
  Dr. Norman F. Childers
2012 Spring FBGA Meeting

March 6, 2012
Meeting

Where:
Plant Science Research & Education Unit 2556 West Highway 318, Citra, Florida 32113

How Much:
FBGA members paying in advance $15 each, all others including all payments at the door $35. Advance payments must be received prior to February 24, 2012.
Welcome to the Florida State Horticultural Society’s website. FSHS is the oldest horticultural society in the United States – it has been in existence since 1888. Please take some time to browse our 100+ years of Proceedings and read our quarterly newsletter. Our 125th Annual Meeting will be June 3-5, 2012 at the beautiful Delray Beach Marriott - Beach Resort. Come join us! We hope you enjoy our website.

President - Juanita Popence

FSHS PROCEEDINGS

2008  2009  2010

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2010 Proceeding: Table of Contents and Abstracts.

See our 2011 Meeting Sponsors!

Click here to begin receiving FSHS Newsletter.
125th FSHS Annual Meeting - June 3 - 5, 2012

Location: Delray Beach Marriott - Beach Resort, Delray Beach, FL

Program & Abstracts - 2011
- Program
- Abstracts
- Sponsors
- See Publications Section for Manuscript Submissions

See you in 2012 at our 125th Meeting in Delray Beach!

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Questions???

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