



# Blueberry

## GLAMOUR CROP

The blueberry has proved to be a "Glamour Crop" in Europe, the United States of America and the Middle East. Few Western Australians have tasted fresh Blueberries. They make a wonderful ingredient in pies, muffins, ice-cream and yoghurt . The fruit can be eaten fresh or frozen for future use. Blueberries make a delightful jam.

## NEW VARIETIES

New varieties that favour warmer climates have recently become available and this has extended the growing areas so that people in Perth can now grow the Blueberry.

The commercial potential looks excellent. Australian growers have the opportunity of not only supplying the local market with this exciting fruit but also exporting to northern hemisphere countries in the "off season". There is a seven million dollar growing venture set to go in Bullsbrook, Western Australia.

## THE HOME GARDEN PROSPECTS:

Blueberries make wonderful addition to the home garden. They are easy grow and are very ornamental with their pretty "Lilly of the Valley" like blooms through spring and early summer. These are followed by the berries which start out a green colour and mature to a deep purple black.

The foliage colours up vividly during the autumn with dashes of red, orange and purple before going into its deciduous phase. The plants make an attractive shrub for the garden and unlike a lot of other berry shrubs, do not sucker up all over the garden. They are easy to care for and doesn't overtake the garden only growing to about 2 metres in height.

## HOW TO GROW BERRIES AT HOME

The major requirement is that the crop has an acid soil. This can achieved by adding copious quantities of Waldecks Pune Peat to sandy soils. Although Blueberries will grow in full sun they can be planted in a position that will receive light shade in the afternoon and they will still succeed.

One of the great secrets of success for shrubs like these, with fairly shallow roots, is a thick mulch of organic material such as Waldecks Sheep manure or Waldecks Karri and Peat mulch. Watering is critical during the summer months as Blueberries must be kept moist. It is important to keep the plants growing with regular applications of Waldecks Premium All Purpose fertiliser. Ideally they should be fed every 4 to 6 weeks through the growing season which extends from September to May.

# POLLINATION

It is very important to plant two different varieties of Blueberry to achieve best pollination. Single plants will not produce a reliable crop.

# PRUNING

It is recommended that in the first three years, the plants be stripped of flowers and fruit in order to maximise growth. After the third year you should commence in the middle of winter to remove old, unthrifty canes to promote new flowering growth in the spring.

# HARVESTING

Plants will reach full production in 6 to 10 years. Berries ripen over a period of 7 weeks. Not all berries within a cluster will ripen at the same time. Select only the ripe berries and leave the others to ripen for the later picking. Ripe berries will hold on a bush for about a week without deteriorating or dropping. Berries are very tender so handle them carefully. Blueberries can be successfully frozen.

Planting distance: 1 to 15 metres apart

Height: At maturity,  
unpruned - 2.5m,  
pruned - 2m

Spread: 2.5 metres

Bearing age: 3 to 4 years

Life expectancy: Indefinite

Happy fruitful gardening