

Blueberry Planting Basics

- Select a sunny site with good drainage and **acidic soil**.
- Ideal pH is 4.5-4.8. **A pH of 5.0 or higher is too high!**
- Test soil pH a year before planting and adjust as needed using elemental sulfur and/or by incorporating shredded pine bark, mulch and/or needles **OR** use pre-mixed acidic soil for azaleas and rhododendrons **OR** make your own mix using 50% peat moss, 25% original soil, 15% compost and 10% sand. If the original soil is heavy in clay, substitute 10% perlite for 10% of original soil.
- If you use peat moss, make sure that it is thoroughly saturated with water before mixing it with loam. Also, make sure the peat/soil mix is thoroughly covered with 1/2"-1" of plain soil after backfilling the hole if you use peat in the mixture. Any peat not covered with soil will wick moisture away from the plant and cause the roots to dry out rapidly.
- Create a bed 18" deep by 36" wide and space plants 3" apart.
- Place soil mixture in bottom of bed to bring plant to proper height.
- Do not fertilize at planting.

Blueberry Planting Basics (cont'd)

- Remove the new plant from its nursery pot and eliminate circling roots by laying the root ball on its side and cutting through the roots with shears. Set the plant 1" deeper than it was growing in the container.
- Place soil mixture around each plant and pack firmly but not hard.
- Water thoroughly.
- Apply 2 to 3 inches of pine or other fir bark mulch (but not cedar). Do not use leaves or sawdust as mulch. Either can limit or prevent rains from reaching the soil and plant roots.
- Maintain moisture throughout the season, and do not allow roots to dry out. Water 1-3 times per week, not everyday.
- Fertilize lightly 6 weeks after planting, but do not fertilize in late summer or early fall. This could lead to new, succulent growth that is susceptible to winter injury and may lead to entry points for disease.
- **Remove all flowers during the first year.** Do not allow berries to develop.