

Blueberry Variety Picker

Your garden-center shopping companion — find the right variety for your climate, space, and taste.

Know Your Chill Hours: Northern varieties need 800–1,000+ hours between 32°F–45°F in winter. Southern types need only 150–300. Planting the wrong match = no fruit. Ask your County Extension office for your local number.

The Buddy System: Always plant at least 2 different varieties with overlapping bloom times. Even "self-fertile" varieties produce up to 30% more fruit with a partner nearby.

Stack Your Harvest: Pick one Early + one Mid + one Late variety to enjoy fresh berries from June through September instead of a two-week flood.

VARIETY	TYPE	ZONES	CHILL HRS	HEIGHT	SEASON	BEST FOR	CROSS-POLLINATE?	FLAVOR & NOTES
Northern Highbush — Cold-Hardy Classics (Zones 3-7)								
Duke	N. Highbush	4-7	800-1,000	5-6 ft	Early	Fresh Freezer	Recommended	Firm, mild sweetness. The gold standard for earliest ripe fruit. Holds up well in the fridge.
Patriot	N. Highbush	3-7	800-1,000	4-6 ft	Early	Fresh Baking	Recommended	Exceptionally large berries. Tolerates heavier soils than most. Holds shape when cooked.
Spartan	N. Highbush	4-7	800-1,000	5-6 ft	Early	Fresh	Recommended	Massive early fruit. Great paired with Duke for an extended early harvest.
Bluecrop	N. Highbush	4-7	800-1,000	5-6 ft	Mid	Fresh Baking Freezer	Recommended	The industry standard. Reliable, heavy yields, classic sweet-tart flavor. Every patch should have one.
Chandler	N. Highbush	4-7	800-1,000	5-6 ft	Mid	Fresh	Recommended	Famous for giant fruit. Sugary-sweet. A showstopper at farmers' markets.
Jersey	N. Highbush	4-7	800-1,000	6-8 ft	Late	Baking Hedge	Recommended	Heirloom (nearly 100 years old). Deep, old-fashioned flavor. Tall — great as a privacy screen.
Elliott	N. Highbush	4-7	800-1,000	5-6 ft	Late	Fresh Baking	Recommended	The late-season king. Ripens into September. Resists dropping fruit. Sweet from extra sun.
Legacy	N. Highbush	5-8	600-800	5-6 ft	Late	Fresh Landscape	Recommended	Highly adaptable. Pushes harvest into fall. Beautiful autumn foliage.
Southern Highbush — Low-Chill Performers (Zones 7-10)								
Misty	S. Highbush	7-10	150-300	4-6 ft	Early	Fresh	Recommended	Vigorous. Beautiful sky-blue fruit. Large, sugary berries. Great for the coastal South.
Sunshine Blue	S. Highbush	5-10	150-300	3 ft	Mid	Container Landscape	Recommended	Dirt Diva favorite! Semi-dwarf, semi-evergreen. #1 pick for pots, patios, and indoor growing.
Rabbiteye — Heat-Tolerant Southern Giants (Zones 7-9) • ⚠️ Must plant 2+ different Rabbiteye varieties for fruit								
Premier	Rabbiteye	7-9	400-500	6-10 ft	Early	Fresh	Required	Largest, best-flavored Rabbiteye. Outstanding for fresh eating.
Tifblue	Rabbiteye	7-9	400-600	8-15 ft	Late	Baking Hedge	Required	Most popular Rabbiteye. Late harvest extends your season. Very drought-tolerant once established.
Brightwell	Rabbiteye	7-9	400-500	6-8 ft	Mid	Fresh Baking	Required	Reliable mid-season producer. Pairs well with Tifblue for staggered harvest.

FROM THE FILES OF THE DIRT DIVA DIARIES

Which Varieties Should I Buy?

Start with your situation, and the right picks will follow.

START HERE — WHAT'S YOUR SITUATION?

📍 By Climate	📏 By Space	🎯 By Goal
<p>→ Cold Winters (Zones 3-4): Half-High varieties (Northblue, Northcountry) are your safest bet. They survive winters that kill Highbush.</p> <p>→ Northern (Zones 4-7): Northern Highbush is your bread and butter. Start with Bluecrop + Patriot.</p> <p>→ Southern (Zones 7-9): Rabbiteye for heat tolerance and massive yields (Premier + Tifblue). Or Southern Highbush for fruit quality (Misty + Sunshine Blue).</p> <p>→ Mild/Coastal (Zones 8-10): Southern Highbush. Pick low-chill varieties like Misty that won't stall in warm winters.</p>	<p>→ Big yard (full rows): Northern Highbush or Rabbiteye. Space 4-6 ft apart (Highbush) or 6-8 ft (Rabbiteye).</p> <p>→ Small yard: Half-High (3 ft) or compact Highbush. You can fit 3-4 bushes in a 15-ft row.</p> <p>→ Patio / Balcony: Sunshine Blue, Top Hat, Jelly Bean, or Peach Sorbet — all thrive in 18-24" pots.</p> <p>→ Indoor growing: Sunshine Blue or Top Hat. They're compact and have lower chill needs. You'll need a grow light (12-14 hrs).</p>	<p>→ Maximum yield: Bluecrop + Duke + Elliott. Three seasons of heavy production.</p> <p>→ Best fresh eating: Chandler (huge, sugary) or Misty (large, sweet).</p> <p>→ Baking & preserving: Bluecrop or Jersey. Firm skin holds shape; classic tang balances sweetness.</p> <p>→ Edible landscape: Jersey (8 ft hedge), Sunshine Blue (foundation planting), Peach Sorbet (ornamental showpiece).</p> <p>→ Kids' garden: Pink Lemonade (pink berries!) + Jelly Bean (candy-sweet).</p>

🌿 Ready-Made "Buddy System" Combos — Grab-and-Go Trios

📍 The Northern Classic

Patriot (Early) + **Bluecrop** (Mid) + **Elliott** (Late)

Fresh berries June through September. The most reliable trio for Zones 4-7.

* The Southern Belle

Premier (Early) + **Brightwell** (Mid) + **Tifblue** (Late)

Heat-tough Rabbiteyes. Staggered harvest all summer. Must have 2+ varieties.

📏 The Patio Trio

Sunshine Blue + **Jelly Bean** + **Peach Sorbet**

All under 3 ft. Gorgeous in pots. Cross-pollinate each other beautifully.

* The Arctic Survivor

Northblue + **Northcountry** + **Patriot**

All survive Zone 3 winters. Compact and cold-hardy. Add Patriot for bigger fruit.

📝 My Shopping Notes

My Zone: _____

My Chill Hours: _____

Space Available: _____

Sun Hours: _____
