

# Soil pH Tracking Log

Because 90% of blueberry problems are pH problems — track it, fix it, grow it.

**Why This Matters:** Blueberries need acidic soil (pH 4.5-5.5) to absorb nutrients. Even one point too high and iron, manganese, and nitrogen become "locked" in the soil — invisible to the roots. Test every year, record everything, and you'll stay ahead of problems before they start.

**GARDENER NAME**                      **GARDEN LOCATION / ZONE**                      **YEAR STARTED**                      **SOIL TYPE**

## THE BLUEBERRY PH SWEET SPOT



■ Too Acidic — rare, but can cause magnesium/calcium depletion 
 ■ Target Zone — nutrients are fully available to roots 
 ■ Too Alkaline — iron and nutrients are "locked out"

## TEST & AMENDMENT LOG

DATE	LOCATION / PLANT	PH READING	IN ZONE?	AMENDMENT APPLIED	AMOUNT	NEXT TEST DATE	NOTES
3/15/25	Row A — Bluecrop	6.2	Too high	Elemental Sulfur	2 lbs / 100 sq ft	9/15/25	Clay soil, slow to convert
9/15/25	Row A — Bluecrop	5.1	✓ Yes!	None needed	—	3/15/26	Sulfur worked — maintain

Dirt Diva's #1 Rule: When in doubt, test the pH first!

FROM THE FILES OF THE DIRT DIVA DIARIES

# pH Amendment Quick Reference

What to use, what to avoid, and how long it takes.

## TO LOWER PH (MAKE MORE ACIDIC)

### ✓ Elemental Sulfur — The Gold Standard

**How it works:** Soil bacteria slowly convert it into sulfuric acid  
**Timeline:** 6-12 months for full effect  
**When to apply:** Fall before spring planting, or late winter  
**General rate:** Sandy soil: ~1 lb per 100 sq ft to drop 1 pH point · Clay soil: ~2 lbs per 100 sq ft (always follow product label)  
**Pro tip:** Works faster in warm, moist soil. Apply and water in.

### ✓ Ongoing Acidifiers

**Ammonium Sulfate fertilizer** — feeds the plant AND lowers pH over time  
**Pine bark / pine needle mulch** — slow, gentle acidification as it decomposes  
**Peat moss in soil mix** — naturally acidic (pH ~3.5-4.5)  
**Rainwater for irrigation** — naturally acidic; prevents hard water from raising pH

### ✗ NEVER Use These on Blueberries

**Aluminum Sulfate** — Toxic to blueberry roots. It lowers pH fast but aluminum ions build up and stunt or kill plants. (Fine for hydrangeas, deadly for blueberries.)  
**Lime or Wood Ash** — These raise pH, the opposite of what you want. Never use in or near your blueberry patch.  
**Uncomposted manure** — Alkaline and high in salts that burn blueberry roots.  
**10-10-10 general fertilizer** — Uses nitrate nitrogen which blueberries can't absorb. Use ammonium-based formulas instead.

### ⦿ Quick Fixes (Temporary)

**Chelated Iron drench** — Greens up yellow leaves within days while sulfur works long-term. Not a permanent fix.  
**Vinegar in watering can** — A small splash can help offset hard (alkaline) tap water. Very short-term; not a replacement for sulfur.  
**Epsom Salts** — 1 tbs per gallon of water. Fixes magnesium deficiency (red leaves), not pH. But often mistaken for a pH problem.

### 📖 Dirt Diva Testing Tips

- ✦ **Sample depth matters:** Dig down 6 inches to the root zone. Surface readings are unreliable.
- ✦ **Test at least once a year** — spring is ideal. Test every 6 months if you're actively amending.
- ✦ **Test multiple spots:** pH can vary across your patch. Test each planting row or container separately.
- ✦ **Hard water is a silent killer:** If your tap water is alkaline, it slowly raises soil pH with every watering. Harvest rainwater when possible or test your water source.
- ✦ **Don't rush:** Sulfur is a biological process, not a chemical instant fix. Give it 6-12 months. Keep new plants in containers while your beds "sour."
- ✦ **Your Extension Office is free:** County Extension labs run professional soil tests (including pH, nutrients, and organic matter) for \$10-25. More accurate than home kits.

## ADDITIONAL TEST LOG (OVERFLOW)

DATE	LOCATION / PLANT	PH READING	IN ZONE?	AMENDMENT APPLIED	AMOUNT	NEXT TEST DATE	NOTES

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