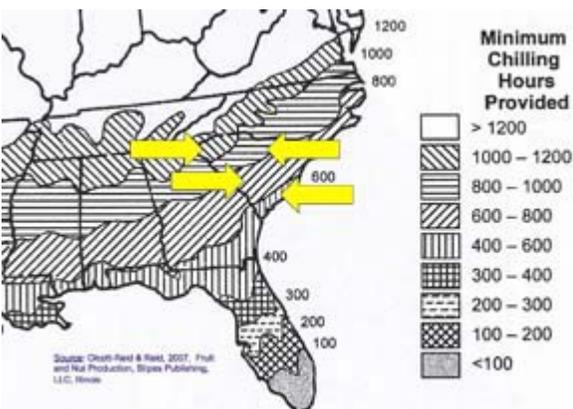


This popular small fruit bears plenty of berries that are delightful when eaten fresh, used in pies, muffins, or pancakes, or added as a fruit topping for breakfast cereals. Also, blueberry plants add beauty to the landscape when grown in beds, rows or as a hedge along the property border. They can even be grown in containers!

In general, rabbiteye blueberries (*Vaccinium virgatum*) are the most adaptable, productive and pest-tolerant of the three types of blueberries. Except for higher mountain elevations, rabbiteye cultivars are adapted to all of South Carolina. In general, rabbiteye blueberries are successful in self-pollinating, but yield best when planted with other varieties. Chilling hours are listed for many cultivars, and this requirement means that the blueberry plants need to be exposed to a sufficient number of hours of winter temperatures below 45 °F in order to produce flowers. The chilling hours in SC range between 1000 to 1200 hours in the upper Piedmont to as low as 400 to 600 hours near the coast.



Southeastern U.S. Region map showing approximate min number of chilling hours by state/region. Note: four chilling hour zones for South Carolina with arrows.

The following blueberry cultivars are recommended in South Carolina and are varieties that Woodley's Garden Center carries:

### *Early Season Cultivars:*

- **Climax:** Plants require 450 chilling hours. This cultivar has a concentrated fruit set with small to medium sized fruit. **Cross-pollinate with other rabbiteye.**
- **Vernon:** Requires 450 hours of chilling. Flowers 7 days after Climax, but ripens before Climax and Premier. Fruit are large, firmness is excellent, and have good flavor and color. **Cross-pollinate with other rabbiteye.**
- **Premier:** Requires 550 chilling hours. Plants produce medium to large sized fruit. **Cross-pollinate with other rabbiteye.**
- **Misty:** Year-round beauty. This attractive bush features a flush of hot pink flowers in spring, followed by blue-green leaves and sky blue, medium to large berries. Requires mulch in winter. Early season. Introduced in 1989. Heat-tolerant. Ripens in June. **Self-pollinating.**
- **Bountiful Blue® :** An award winning variety with the bluest of foliage! Pink-blushed flowers produce a big crop of large, sweet, juicy berries on a compact, mounded shrub. Perfect for hedges or planting in large tubs. **Self-pollinating**, though planting with another variety may increase yields. Needs only 150-200 winter chill hours.

### *Mid-season Cultivars:*

- **Tifblue:** Requires 650 chilling hours. Plants produce small to medium size fruit, which must get fully ripe or they will be tart. **Cross-pollinate with other rabbiteye.**
- **Rebel:** Plants require 400 to 450 chilling hours. The fruit are large with good to excellent color and firmness. Fruit can become bland if they remain on plant too long. Plants are productive. **Self-pollinating.**
- **Biloxi:** Medium-sized berries are high quality with a distinct, excellent flavor. Recommended for Coastal areas and Zones 9 and 10 where the bush is fully evergreen. Hybrid plants are upright, vigorous and productive. In the Deep South, Biloxi will produce two crops! Main crop ripens mid season. Recommended chill is less than 150 hours. **Self-pollinating.**

### *Late Season Cultivars:*

- **Sunshine Blue:** One of the best for mild-winter areas, a low-chill selection perfect for small gardens or large patio tubs. Blue-green foliage and showy pink to white flowers provide ornamental value, followed by an abundant crop of fruit. **Self-pollinating**, but yields best when planted with another variety. Recommended winter chill: 150 hours.
- **Summer Sunset™ :** Chilling requirement is 500 to 550 hours. Fruit are medium sized and multi-colored as they go through the stages of ripening (first yellow-green, then orange-red, to red, to purple, and finally black). Vigorous. Recommended chill is 300-400 hours. **Cross-pollinate with other rabbiteye.**

**Soil pH Adjustment:** Check pH of soil before planting. A very low soil pH caused by excess sulfur can be detrimental. When growing blueberries, keep the pH above 5.0 to avoid problems with manganese toxicity. Any sulfur applications should be made at least three months prior to planting because it takes several months for sulfur to reduce the pH. Check pH once or twice during the first growing season.

**Soil Water Drainage:** On a heavy clay soil or a soil that sometimes remains wet, apply **Stout Ollie Compost** and **Gypsum**. Otherwise, plant with **Stout Ollie Compost** at a 1:1 ratio with existing soil. Blueberries love organic matter!

**Time:** Late winter (February-March) as soon as the soil can be worked is best for bare-root plants; fall (November-December) planting has been successful on sandy soils with bare-root plants and in other areas with potted plants.

**Fertilizing:** Blueberries are easily damaged by excess fertilizer. Apply recommended amount and allow 4 inches of rain or an equivalent amount of irrigation between applications. We recommend **Ferti-Lome Gardeners Special**.

**Pruning:** During the first five years little pruning will be required. Remove lower twiggy growth, dead or damaged shoots, and weak, spindly growth. Tip back excessively long and limber shoots to stimulate lateral branching and to thicken the shoots. Prune young plants during the dormant season and immediately after harvest with older plants. If plants become too tall to harvest, selectively remove about 1/3 of older canes in the winter. These selective cuts should be made to open up the center of the plant to improve light penetration and to allow new canes to develop to replace old canes.