
The Wild Blueberry

Maine's 44,000 acres of Wild Blueberries grow naturally in fields and barrens that stretch from Downeast to the state's southwest corner. Naturally suited to Maine's acidic, low-fertility soils and challenging winters, Wild Blueberries are a low-input crop requiring minimal



In late summer, the beautiful Wild Blueberry fields and barrens are harvested. Most are mechanically harvested by tractor pickers however some fields are still harvested in the traditional way using hand-held berry rakes.

management. The berries are grown on a two-year cycle. Each year, half of the grower's land is managed to encourage flower bud growth and the other half is prepared for the Wild Blueberry harvest in August. After harvest, the plants are pruned to the ground by mowing or burning.

Preserving Maine's Wild Blueberry Heritage

Wild Blueberries have become a symbol of Maine's agricultural heritage—a heritage that respects and values our environment. Because growers are committed to being good stewards of the land, future generations will continue to enjoy some of Maine's most scenic vistas and precious wildlife habitats.



To learn more about Maine's Wild Blueberries and the lands on which they grow, talk with a local Wild Blueberry grower or contact the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine.



Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

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Maine's WILD BLUEBERRY LANDS

*Preserving our agricultural
heritage for future generations*



Integrated Crop Management

Wild Blueberries are indigenous to Maine and, therefore, are naturally resistant to many native pests. Still, there are times when environmental stressors such as disease, drought, insect pest damage and winter injury can ruin much of the plant and fruit. To minimize crop damage without harming the environment, growers use continually evolving knowledge-based techniques called Integrated Crop Management (ICM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM). For example, taking leaf tissue samples to determine whether plants need to be fertilized



Wild Blueberry growers use a variety of pest scouting techniques including sweeping to actively monitor insect levels.

is now common ICM practice. Growers use ICM and IPM throughout the crop cycle to monitor for disease and insect levels that could reduce crop quality and production. When necessary, growers consider a full range of control methods, from cultural techniques to the selective application of pesticides.



Learning Through Research

Since 1945, Maine's Wild Blueberry growers and processors have provided financial support for research at the University of Maine. This successful partnership has resulted in improved ICM and IPM cropping practices.



A new laboratory facility at Blueberry Hill Farm in Jonesboro was dedicated in 2006 for advanced crop management research.

Since 1980, insecticide use to control the native blueberry fruit fly has declined by 80% thanks to an evolving IPM approach. There are now years when growers do not have to treat their fields for blueberry fruit fly. If and when invasive species are introduced new IPM practices need to be developed to protect the crop. Research has enabled Maine's growers to quadruple the state's annual average production of Wild Blueberries. Thanks to advances in ICM and IPM, growers can better minimize crop loss while sustaining Maine's Wild Blueberry fields and barrens for future generations.



Within hours of being harvested, Wild Blueberries are cleaned and individually quick frozen, using state-of-the-art technology.

Maine's Native Berry

The Wild Blueberry holds a special place in Maine's agricultural history—one that goes back centuries to Maine's Native Americans. They were first to use the tiny berries, both fresh and dried, for their flavor, nutrition and healing qualities. Maine Wild Blueberries were commercially harvested as early as the 1840s. Today with a total economic impact of more than \$250 million annually, Wild Blueberries make a major contribution to Maine's economy. Demand for both fresh and frozen Wild Blueberries is steadily growing in the US and abroad, thanks to research on the health and nutritional benefits of these antioxidant-rich berries. The future looks bright for Wild Blueberries—Maine's Official State Berry. For more on the health story please visit us at www.wildblueberries.com.

A Message to ATV Riders and Snowmobilers

Protect our Wild Blueberry Lands



Maine Wild Blueberry growers allow hundreds of miles of trails to cross their fields and barrens, welcoming snowmobilers and ATV riders to enjoy their lands.

However, Wild Blueberry plants can be severely damaged, even when snow covered, by riders who leave the marked trail. This costs growers thousands of dollars in lost crops. That's why we ask you to please respect these lands and Maine law:

- STAY OFF CROP LANDS
- STAY ON MARKED TRAILS
- LEAVE NO TRACKS ON FIELDS
- CARRY OUT ALL YOUR TRASH
- OBTAIN WRITTEN LANDOWNER PERMISSION, UNLESS ON A MARKED TRAIL



*Thank you for helping us preserve
an important part of Maine's heritage.*



WILD BLUEBERRY COMMISSION OF MAINE

For information about the rules of public property access, please visit the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife website at maine.gov/ifw/av_snowmobile_watercraft/index.htm or the Maine Snowmobile Association website at mesnow.com

