

An Experimental Farm in Miniature





OME years ago, a friend of ours was mentioning some of the things he'd like to see. The entire list is not worth repeating here, but in addition to seedless watermelon and "cherries in pods like peas," he included *big*, juicy Blueberries, with no seeds. Besides a lot of nonsense, he had a real idea.

Just why nobody succeeded in cultivating Blueberries for so many years is not clear. Perhaps they were not understood, as they are not at all successful in ordinary gardens. Most garden plants require sweet soil, but Blueberries are just contrary enough in their demands to consider an acid soil absolutely essential. Naturally, when pioneer gardeners transplanted them to the usual alkaline, sweet, or lime garden soil, it was impossible for them to thrive. Today their characteristics are better understood, and the proper methods of cultivation are easily applied.

For a long time we have been experimenting with Blueberry plants. One object was to get large berries—and have them as seedless as possible. Besides ideal berries we were anxious to obtain strong, vigorous plants, which would produce well without much attention. Now, after many experiments, we have selected several varieties which are far superior to the familiar wild sorts in vigor of growth, production of berries and size of fruit.

While the well-known berries from wild plants are small, occasional berries from our cultivated bushes are three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and over ninety per cent will exceed half an inch across. Besides, the varieties offered here have seeds so small as to be almost unnoticeable, while ordinary huckleberries frequently seem to contain nothing else. The pleasure of eating plump Blueberries with cream, or in the form of Blueberry pie, really can't be imagined—it must be experienced. After all, imagination has its limits.

Here's Our Problem

Now, after years of trial and tribulation with wild plants, and subsequent experiments with the cultivated specimens developed from them, we feel that our distinct varieties are well worth while. Each of them produces heavy crops of delicious berries, all of good size, all with small, insignificant seeds.

In our section of New Jersey they grow splendidly, and we hope that elsewhere they will do as well. There seems to be one sure way to determine, and that is to give them proper distribution, with the understanding that the growers inform us how they succeed.

It isn't merely a question of whether they will grow or not, because if they are given proper soil and treatment they will surely grow. We want to know if they have any particular preference about climate, and if other culture than we give them will produce better growth. In the cultural directions upon the last page, we have given in detail all the information necessary. If our instructions are followed, you are fairly certain to enjoy many Blueberries from your bushes. But—which variety will grow best in your locality? We don't know now; we expect you to tell us. Later, when we have enough of these plants to sell them in the usual way, we wish to recommend a particular variety for each locality.



The difference between huckleberries and cultivated blueberries is clearly shown

Here's Our Plan

We earnestly desire to interest conscientious people in "An Experimental Farm in Miniature." We have only two hundred sets of test plants to distribute this year and we are anxious to submit them to as many different conditions of climate and culture as possible.

Our "Try and Report" Plan calls for the delivery of one plant each of three of our choicest varieties for \$3. Each set will include one plant each of Rubel and Harding, which we formerly sold for \$25 each.

This price does not cover the actual cost of the plants, nevertheless this isn't a "bargain offer," because these sets of three plants are sold only with the understanding that you report their progress from time to time. We particularly wish to know how well these cultivated varieties will succeed in other sections of the country.

These plants will be sold only in sets, and only one set to each customer.

You get three valuable Blueberry plants—most unusual garden novelties—at a ridiculously low cost, and we gain valuable information. As the first two hundred applications will exhaust the number available, we advise interested gardeners to fill out the order slip and mail it immediately with check or money order. The plants from three-inch pots will be shipped in ample time for planting, and preparation of the plot intended for them may proceed as soon as the weather permits. Be sure to read the cultural directions thoroughly before planting, and save this circular for future reference.

The bushes shown upon the front cover of this folder are three years older than those we offer. Blueberry plants make a fairly rapid growth each year if conditions are right; some of the older bushes upon our grounds are five feet high and are yearly increasing in size.

JOSEPH J. WHITE, Inc., New Lisbon, N. J.

Cultural Directions

Blueberries require an acid soil, preferably one composed of peat and sand. The ordinary garden is not suitable, but a small space can be converted into an excellent blueberry patch very easily. In light, well drained soil a 6-inch layer of peaty material should be spaded in and thoroughly mixed with the top 12 inches of soil. To heavy soil a liberal amount of sand should be added, or a trench may be dug 3 or 4 feet wide and about a foot deep, and filled with a mixture of two-thirds sand and one-third peaty material. *Never use lime or stable manure.*

For peaty material we recommend partially rotted leaves because excellent results have been secured by using them. Those which rot quickly, such as maple leaves, do not answer the purpose so well as those which rot slowly, like oak leaves, pine needles or laurel leaves. Probably the "peat" easiest for many people to obtain is partially rotted saw-dust or the partially rotted chips and litter that are always to be found around an old wood pile. This answers the purpose in every way.

It is quite possible that other vegetable matter could be substituted for the above—apple pomace or damaged beet pulp might serve. If any of our customers have an opportunity to use such substances, we should like very much to be informed of the results.

During the first stages of decay vegetable matter furnishes the necessary acidity, and later as the decay proceeds it also furnishes plant food. When this disintegration is almost complete the acidity disappears. On wild Blueberry lands the acidity is naturally kept up, but where soil has to be specially prepared for Blueberries it is necessary to add fresh leaves or other vegetable matter each year to maintain the proper acid condition.

Blueberry plants are most successful on soil that is always damp, but never soggy wet. They require a continuous supply of moisture, but become sick when they have "wet feet."

The plants may be set out any time after frost is out of the ground. They should be placed at least 4 feet apart, otherwise the branches are likely to interlace within three or four years and make picking difficult. If the soil is not prepared when the plants are received, they may be heeled-in where the sun does not strike them and where the ground is damp, or they may be put in a cool cellar. Never permit the roots to dry out.

Set the plants about half an inch deeper than they were in the nursery; water thoroughly when they are planted. Before warm weather comes mulch the plants, that is, cover the surface of the ground an inch or more deep, with the same peaty material used to prepare the bed. Mulch as far out as the roots can possibly reach the first year and be careful not to smother the little plants.

The acidity of the soil and the supply of plant food should be kept up by heavy mulches of fresh leaves each year. After the first season the mulch should be 4 to 6 inches deep and reach as far from the base of the plant as the top does above it.

Please note especially that *partially rotted* leaves, wood or other vegetable matter is to be used in the first preparation of the soil, while *freshly fallen* leaves or other comparatively sound vegetable matter is needed for the annual mulch.

Water should be given as needed. The Blueberry foliage will tell you when the plants have the right amount of water by keeping richly green till frost crimson them. When the plant is too dry the edges of the leaves wither and turn brown—when too wet the leaves become red or purplish during warm weather; if the plants are drained soon enough, however, these same red leaves turn green again.

If grown according to our directions, the bushes should contain a few berries the second summer after planting. The following year they should produce a fair-sized crop, and a few years later the market value of the annual crop should exceed the price of the plants.

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