

WHY NOT THE NATIVE BLUEBERRY?

Haskell sees Great Commercial
Possibilities

Of all the wild fruits native to New England none excels the blueberry in its particular season, and yet this is almost the only important native fruit which has not yet been brought into culture in a large way. The reason, of course, is that, at least until recently, people have not learned how to propagate it, — how to prune, fertilize, spray, and otherwise handle this berry.

Rather remarkably, the blueberry is naturally wonderfully well suited to our soils. These soils are acid. It has been estimated that to bring our improved land to what chemists call a neutral or sweet condition will require the expenditure of at least \$9,000,000, and that an expenditure of a quarter of this sum must be made annually to keep our soils in that condition. Yet in the blueberry we have a potential crop which thrives on acid soils and which never grows to perfection in soils over-rich in lime. Therefore why not take some of our lands and put them into productive blueberry culture?

The Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station has a small blueberry plantation operated in connection with the Cranberry Station at Wareham. One of the most striking things on this plantation are two rows of blueberries, one with the plants transplanted from the wild, just as they happened to come, and the other transplanted with definite intention of getting the better bushes.

This comparison illustrates in the most striking way the possibilities of blueberry culture. It shows, for one thing, that all blueberries are not blue — some are black; yet all are true blueberries. The black blueberries are usually small, commonly earlier than the blue blueberries, rather unproductive, and of rather low table quality, although some of them are very sweet and would be worth while were it not for their small size.

And then there are all sorts of sizes and shapes and flavors of the blue blueberries. Some kinds are unproductive, others are quite otherwise; some plants ripen early, others very late. On some plants the berries ripen together so that the harvesting may be done very cheaply; on others, individual berries ripen here and there so that at no one time can the crop be harvested. All of these types put together show the necessity of careful selection in order to make commercial berry culture profitable.

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But on this experimental plantation there is more to be seen than these two comparative rows. Several years ago Mr. Frederick Coville of the United States Department of Agriculture found out how to propagate blueberries, and developed a number of selected varieties. Through the co-operation of the Bureau of Plant Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture some of the better of these varieties have been sent to the Cranberry Station for trial.

The difference between the selected berries and these artificially produced varieties is even greater than between the selected and unselected rows of wild berries. The new varieties are very large. In some cases the clusters of berries are as large as a man's fist. Individual berries nearly half an inch through are common, and larger berries by no means uncommon. The quality of these berries is superb, their attractiveness when prepared for the table unexcelled. The difference in cost of harvesting berries as they occur in their native wild condition and of harvesting these "tame" varieties will be as great as the difference between harvesting wild strawberries and cultivated strawberries from the garden.

Everything indicates that Massachusetts is about ready to establish a commercial blueberry-growing industry. A part of it, doubtless, will be located on the low, sandy areas adjacent to some of our cranberry bogs, and still another part in the upland pastures all over the balance of the State. Berries

can be eaten fresh, they can be canned — there is apparently no limit to the market which might be developed for this most succulent fruit; the harvesting season comes when other work is not pressing; and finally, the lands to which blueberries are best adapted are often too rough and too "acid" to be more than moderately well adapted to the growth of other crops. — SIDNEY B. HASKELL, *Director, Massachusetts Experiment Station.*

WAYS TO USE BLUEBERRIES

First of New Leaflets for Polish Home-makers

The following blueberry recipes are clipped from a new leaflet of the Extension Service, compiled by Miss Lucy M. Queal, nutrition specialist. The leaflet is entitled "Ways to Use Blueberries," and is one of four home-making leaflets that Miss Queal has prepared for publication in a Polish-English translation, Polish on one side and English on the other. They were prepared for the use of the Polish housewives of the State, but so far as they last they will be mailed on request to any home-maker in Massachusetts.

The other new home-making leaflets of this series are "Five Easily Made Relishes;" "Home Baking," which is a sheet of baking recipes for bread, cake and pies; and "Some Simple Breakfasts for Children."

Here are the blueberry recipes: —

Blueberry Muffins.

- 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups flour.
- 4 teaspoons baking powder.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar.
- 1 cup berries.
- 1 cup milk.
- 1 egg.
- 3 tablespoons butter or oil.

Mix and sift all the dry ingredients; add the blueberries without their juice. Mix the milk and egg together and add to the flour mixture. Add butter last and beat the mixture thoroughly.

Bake twenty to twenty-five minutes in one-layer pans or in muffin pans, well greased.

By adding more sugar and more fat or oil to the recipe a cake is made.

Blueberry Jam or Preserves.

Pick over berries and remove all leaves, stems, and bad berries.

Weigh the berries.

To every pound of berries use 1 or 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar.

Put berries in an enamel kettle, and crush some of the berries. Heat slowly until the juice runs out and then boil quickly. Stir the berries often to keep them from burning. When the berries are boiled down until thick, add the sugar and boil until quite thick. Pour into glasses while hot and seal at once.

If jelly has been made of the juice of the blueberries very good jam may be made of the pulp that is left, using this same recipe.

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Blueberry Jelly.

4 quarts blueberries.
4 cups water.
Sugar.

Boil berries and water together gently for five minutes. Strain the juice through one layer of cheesecloth. Save the juice and put the pulps back into the kettle.

Add 2 cups of water for every quart of pulps. Boil five minutes and let stand ten or fifteen minutes. Strain through one layer of cheesecloth, squeezing the pulps to get all the juice possible.

Mix the two juices and strain through four layers of cheesecloth. Measure the strained juice and put in a kettle to boil. Measure out one-half as much sugar as there is fruit juice. Put sugar in a separate pan.

Boil down the measured juice until there is about two-thirds of the original amount left in the kettle; then add the sugar and boil rapidly until the jelly drops from the spoon in large drops that are flat or like flakes.

Strain and pour into glasses and set aside to cool.