



## Emerald Goddess Gardens

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Botanical Name	Vaccinium Pink Lemonade
Common Name	Pink Lemonade
Type	Rabbiteye Southern Highbush Hybrid
Mature Size	4 to 6 feet
Fruit size	Medium to Large
Fruit time	July, August
Zones	4 to 9
Water	Drip irrigation recomme
Light	Best in full sun
Key Features	Modest chill, vigorous upright bush, self pollinating
Chill Hours	300 hours to 500 @ 45°F
Fragrant	Yes



Pink Lemonade is a beautiful and unique blueberry cultivar that is a cross between northern highbush blueberries and other rabbit eye cultivars. It was developed at the Henry A Wallace Agricultural Research Facility in Arkansas in 2005 and introduced for the Home Garden Market in 2007 when it won the award for the 'Best New shrub' at the prestigious Far West Horticultural Show.

The goal of the developers was to increase cold hardiness and commercial growing range of a favorite Southern growing berry. The pink berries were a wonderful serendipitous surprise.

The story of Pink Lemonade gets better, because the unusual pretty vivid hot pink berries are only one of this berries' great attributes. It is also a very lovely plant with fine dark green foliage that changes to red orange in the fall with pretty red stems throughout the winter when it's dormant, that are then all decked out in lightly fragrant white and pink flowers in the early spring. The late season berries are green when they first appear and change to vivid hot pink as they ripen in July and August.

Pink Lemonade will grow and produce across a wide climate range. Generally it is well recommended for Zones 4-8, with research still ongoing for Zone 9. Most Home Gardeners are reporting good success with it in Zone 9. Minimum chill requirements appear to be low to medium at 300 to 500 hours @ 45° F. It is self pollinating, however, yields appear to be better when other rabbit eye cultivar is also planted nearby.

For the best results with Pink Lemonade Blueberry:

- Plant in fertile well draining, slightly acidic soil
- Plant other rabbit eye cultivars nearby for cross pollination
- Allow a full growing season or possibly 2 for best fruiting
- Supply supplemental irrigation (slow drip is recommended)
- Feed good quality fertilize monthly from Jan to March.
- Prune after harvest
- Spray for leaf spot during hot, humid conditions if needed
- Mulch roots heavily prior to first frost in cold climates

Please email us with any questions at [emeraldgoddessgardens@gmail.com](mailto:emeraldgoddessgardens@gmail.com)

## Care of Your New Rabbiteye Blueberry Plant

Here are a few basic guidelines for handling and caring for Rabbiteye type Blueberries:

Rabbiteye Blueberries are generally easier to grow than the Southern Highbush type. They are more tolerant to drought and less susceptible to root rot. They flower later in the spring, making them less susceptible to late winter/early spring freezes. They require less organic matter and less mulching, and they are generally more vigorous.

Their fruit has a slightly tougher skin and somewhat larger seed, and hold up better in storage.

Rabbiteyes require cross-pollination from another rabbiteye cultivar. The harvest season for rabbiteye blueberries extends from May to July, depending on the cultivar.

**Check the recommended USDA Zone Range for the plant, and the estimated number of chill hours required. Choosing the right plant for the Zone is imperative to successfully growing Blueberries.**

Direct planting of 4 inch starter size plants or plugs directly into the landscape or garden is not recommended. So, for the best results with your new plant we suggest that it be repotted into a larger pot and allowed to grow larger until the new pot is filled with roots before setting out.

When your new plant has grown large enough to set out, here are a few tips for successful growing.

- Plan to set out in early Spring when freeze danger is past in colder Zones, or December-February in tropical and semi-tropical Zones.
- Locate in full sun.
- Plant a different Rabbiteye cultivar in the general vicinity, as cross-pollination is needed for successful fruiting.
- Prepare planting area with a raised, flattened bed to a depth of approximately 18 inches, so that soil is loose, fertile, and well draining. Amend with 2 to 3% high quality organic material such as peat moss and adjust ph range if necessary to a range of 4-5 as blueberries are acid loving plants.
- Consider mature size in spacing, and allow an area of at least 5 to 7 feet x 5 to 7 feet for each plant. Overcrowding will reduce yields and increase risk of irrigation, pest and disease problems.
- Apply a high quality, slow release, fertilize about a week or two after initial planting. A formula designed for acid loving flowering/fruiting plants such as citrus, gardenias, ixora, azaleas, and hibiscus is generally available in most large chain store garden centers, and will work well for Blueberries as well. Apply at the label rate, spreading fertilizer evenly about a circle 2 feet from the central stalk of the plant. Repeat in April, June, August and October.
- Plant high so that approximately 1-2 inches of the existing root ball is sitting above the garden soil level. Note that the roots of Blueberries grow high and shallow.
- Spread a thick 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch to cover. Pine straw is the most commonly recommended mulch for blueberries.
- Prune lightly at the time of planting removing any weak twiggy growth and leaving the longest, strongest canes.
- Remove flowers to prevent fruit from setting the first season after planting in order to build a strong, vigorous root system.
- Maintain consistent and uniform moisture in the soil. Take care not to over water. Note that water needs will decrease in winter.
- The second season, after the plants have finished fruiting, prune for maintenance, by thinning canes and reducing the height of the canopy by 1/3 to 1/4. The goal of pruning mature bushes is to stimulate the proper balance between bushy and bearing growth. Cane removal pruning stimulates the development of new canes, which tend to be more productive than older canes. Once the plant is four to five years old or older, a general rule is to remove about 1/4–1/5 of the oldest canes each year (usually 1–3 of the oldest canes). This will result in continuous cane renewal so that no cane is more than three or four years old.
- Control weeds. Because of the shallow root system, Blueberries do not compete well with weeds. Adequate weed control that does not allow weeds to grow and develop within 2 feet of the plant is essential.
- Monitor for symptoms of pests/disease and treat accordingly. Your local Agricultural Extension Office is your best resource for identifying pest/disease issues and recommending appropriate treatments.