



# Sierra View Nursery Inc.

## Blueberry Care

Blueberries are truly an American fruit, with several species native to North America. They are relatively easy to grow when given acidic soils and the right growing climate. Most blueberry varieties need a pollinizer variety planted nearby to produce the maximum amount of fruit. For good fruit crops, and vigorous growth, plant in morning sun/afternoon shade in the central valley.

### Planting

Dig a hole twice the width of the size of the pot, and just as deep as the root ball. Blueberries grow best with a soil pH of 4.0-5.5. Blueberries have very shallow roots which do not like competition from other plants. Be diligent about removing all weeds, perennial grasses, rocks, tree stumps, tree roots, and anything else in the soil *before* planting. Prevention goes a long way and is worth the time. If you don't have a desirable spot, container growing may be an option to consider.

Spacing for blueberries depends upon the desired use in the landscape. Bushes can be planted individually or in a hedgerow. If planting a hedgerow space 5-6 feet apart with rows 10-12 feet apart. If planting bushes individually, place plants for cross pollination no more than 10 feet apart.

### Watering

The first year is a critical time for your new blueberry. It has not had time to establish itself yet and therefore is not as strong as an older tree. Make sure to water thoroughly allowing the first two to three top inches of the soil are dry. Yellowing and dropping of leaves may indicate drought or over-watering. Mulching with a 2-3" layer of *Mini Pebbles or Small Deco Bark* will help to maintain uniform soil moisture and prevent weeds.

### Pruning

If vigorous, well-rooted two-year-old plants are set, they do not need cutting back the first year except to remove fruit buds shortly after planting. Pruning should be moderately heavy in the second year to stimulate strong new growth on selected canes. Be sure to thin if too many clusters develop to prevent branches breaking from the weight.

### Fertilizing

Blueberry plants are sensitive and prefer organic, acidic, slow-release fertilizers, such as, *Down To Earth Acid Mix*. Be sure to evenly spread fertilizer under the entire canopy of your bush, avoiding a two-to-three-inch area closest to the trunk. After fertilizing, be sure to water your tree. Depending on the age of your plant, application of the fertilizer should be adjusted.