

## Blueberries for a Brighter Future

Fresh fruit is one of the most delightful pleasures of summer living. And one of the most nurturing of all is blueberries. If blue berries are nutritional treasures, wild blueberries are the crown jewels. Research suggest they not only help prevent memory loss but may also improve motor skills and help lower blood pressure. They are also high in antioxidants that help fight wrinkles. In a study at Cornell University, researchers found wild blueberries to have the highest content of antioxidants like anthocyanins.

Anthocyanidins are antioxidant phytonutrients that neutralize free radical damage to the collagen matrix of cells and tissues. This blue red pigment in blueberries improves the support structures of the entire vascular system. Vision improvement is one of the areas blueberries have been found to make one of the most remarkable differences. Another important chemical found in blueberries is ellagic acid. Laboratory studies published in the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry show these compounds blocks metabolic pathways that can lead to cancer. Other helpful areas are brain function and gastrointestinal health.

There are many simple ways to include wild blueberries and other fruits into our diet. Top off a cup of yogurt with them, toss a handful into your morning smoothie, sprinkle a half a cup on top of your salad, and just simply eat them by the handful. Wild frozen blueberries are available year round. Because of their soft flesh, it is better to buy organic wild blueberries where possible. Growing your own blueberries is easy. First, choose one of several different varieties that grow well in our southern region. Second, prepare your soil with clay busters and compost. Third, dig a hole twice as large as your root ball and work the surrounding clay into the added soil mixture. And finally, choose a bright, sunny, well drained spot and you will have low maintenance blueberries for years to come.

Have a healthy summer,

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