



BC blueberries

Powered by nature.

The Business of Blueberries

In British Columbia, plantings of premium quality highbush blueberries top 12,000 hectares grown by more than 600 farmers, and produce upwards of 68,000 tonnes (150 million pounds) of blueberries annually. This accounts for 98 per cent of Canada's highbush blueberry market.

British Columbia is now the third biggest highbush blueberry growing region in the world – behind the USA and Chile. Seventy per cent of the blueberry crop is exported with the two largest markets being the USA and Japan.

British Columbia's blueberry farms employ more than 10,000 people to work the fields and harvest the fruit annually.

Throughout blueberry season, from July through September, B.C. blueberries are both hand-picked and machine harvested, and are available in a variety of grades and wholesale quantities. Because they are so versatile, along with being available fresh, B.C. blueberries are also packed for year-round distribution. As demand for the tasty and highly-nutritious fruits grow, markets for frozen, dried, juiced, powdered, puffed and puréed blueberry products continue to rise globally.

The British Columbia Blueberry Council

BC's blueberry industry started in the 1920s when blueberries were first planted in the bog area around Richmond. In the 1930s and 40s it expanded to the Pitt Meadows and then in the 1950s into the Fraser Valley.

The BC Blueberry Council was formed in 1989 and today represents over 600 highbush growers as well as 30 packers/processors. There is 12,141 hectares (30,000 acres) of highbush blueberries planted in order to meet growing worldwide demand.

Food Safety

The BC Blueberry Council has a strong commitment to on-farm food safety and works diligently with blueberry growers and collaborates with packers and processors to ensure that BC blueberries meet the highest standards for food safety and quality. www.bcblueberry.com.

The BC Blueberry Council offers food safety workshops and farm assessments free of charge. The MarketSafe certificate course has also been developed for growers selling at roadside stands or farmers' markets. Processors in B.C. adhere to stringent standards of food safety and quality, ensuring premium products to our customers.

Environment and Agriculture

B.C. Blueberries may be grown conventionally or organically, but in both cases, British Columbia blueberry farmers strive to be responsible stewards of the environment.

B.C. blueberry growers care for their fields and the soil by promoting proper drainage through raised planting beds, and the use of irrigation and sawdust mulch for weed and moisture control. The area between the rows is often planted with a cover crop to help keep the soil healthy.

Many conventional blueberry growers use an integrated pest management system (IPM) which stresses information, monitoring and careful diagnosis along with the best and safest control techniques to protect both the crop and the environment.

Canadian agriculture products like sweet, British Columbia blueberries are grown and handled in accordance with strict Canadian food safety standards, are reliable and environmentally friendly. Quality is in our nature.

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