

Upper Deerfield Township

Environmental Commission

Blueberries: A NJ Favorite

*Is it the soil? The sun? The rainfall?
All of the above make Jersey blueberries plump and delicious.*



The blueberry was introduced to the commercial market over a century ago by Elizabeth Coleman White, who planted wild blueberries on her family's cranberry farm in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. In 1916 she and botanist F. V. Coville of the U.S. Department of Agriculture cultivated the world's first domesticated blueberry crop, sold under the name Tru-Blu-Berries. The spring blueberry crop was the perfect complement to the already established fall cranberry crop.

High in fiber, vitamins C and K, and antioxidants; free of cholesterol and sodium; and low in calories, blueberries are known world-wide for their health benefits and medicinal properties. The Mayo Clinic calls them a "Superfood." In 2019, farmers in central and south Jersey harvested 44 million pounds on 9,000 acres spanning seven counties. Blueberries were named the state fruit in 2003, a fitting tribute for New Jersey's #1 crop, that brings in more than \$62 million per year.

Can you grow blueberries in your yard? Get a soil test to find out. Ideal sites have plenty of sun and acidic, well-drained soil that is high in organic matter with a pH of 4.0 to 4.8. As long as these requirements are met, the bushes will grow well in the home garden, producing a harvest in two to three years. They won't require spraying for insects or disease, but be aware that they're popular not only with people, but also with wildlife of all kinds. As soon as you get them planted, surround them with fencing—and don't forget the top. Birds love blueberries!

Grandmother's Blueberry Pudding

1 qt. blueberries

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1/2 c. butter

1 c. sugar

1/8 t. cinnamon

1 c. flour

Put berries into a baking dish. Add lemon juice and cinnamon. Sift flour and sugar and blend in butter to make crumbs. Spread crumbs over berries; bake for 45 minutes in hot oven (400°).

Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

-Marion L. Kirby in the **Bridgeton Bicentennial Cookbook** 1976

New Basketball Program

A basketball league for grades five through eight was launched in Upper Deerfield this spring and will expand this summer to include high school students. Environmental Commission member Bill Ziefle serves as chairperson for the Recreation Commission, which oversees leagues for baseball, softball, soccer and football. Upper Deerfield Township Public Works Department maintains the playing facilities, including fields and hardtop, parking areas, trash removal and rest rooms. "We try to provide healthy recreation for the youth of our community," reports Ziefle. "We also oversee Upper Deerfield's well-outfitted senior center and maintain several small playgrounds for younger kids. A walking trail is currently being planned."



Tracking Precipitation in Your Back Yard

When it rained without stop for 48 hours in August of 2011, Environmental Commission Vice Chairperson Lynn Maun knew there could be trouble. The professional rain gauge in her back yard showed a total of 10.82 inches of rain, certainly enough to overflow the Raceway. When the Raceway collapsed and Sunset Lake drained, she was not surprised. "I've been a CoCoRaHS volunteer since Ground Hog Day of 2008, so I get a sense of what's happening before it's even announced."

Currently serving as the Cumberland County Coordinator for CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network), every morning Lynn measures and reports the amount of liquid that has collected in the rain gauge (right) mounted on a post in her back yard. She then emails the data to CoCoRaHS at Colorado State University, who collate the data for use by the National Weather Service and other meteorologists, hydrologists, emergency managers, water resource managers, city utilities, insurance adjusters, USDA, engineers, mosquito control, ranchers and farmers. The office of the New Jersey State Climatologist also receives and makes use of the data.

Lynn was one of the first volunteers in NJ. Now there are 18 in Cumberland County and nearly 600 in NJ, but gaps still exist across the state. "The more complete the data, the more useful it is for needs like water resource analysis or severe storm warnings," she says. "So we are actively recruiting volunteer backyard weather observers." Nationwide, there are more than 20,000 CoCoRaHS volunteers in all 50 states. Major sponsors include The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), with support of money, supplies or equipment from many other sources.

For more information, go to www.cocorahs.org or contact Lynn Maun at lynnkmaun@comcast.net.

