PLANT FACT SHEET

Vaccinium angustifolium Aiton

GENUS *Vaccinium* **FAMILY** Ericaceae

COMMON NAMES Low-bush blueberry, American Blueberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit can be eaten raw. The berries are also cooked by boiling and canned. They are used for muffins, cookies, pies and other products. They can be dried.

DESCRIPTION

A small shrub. It grows 30 cm high. It has wiry, twiggy shoots. It forms a low spreading mat with underground stems or rhizomes up to 10 m long. It puts out uprights from nodes on these stems. The plants become dormant during winter. The leaves are narrow and sword shaped. They are 1.3-3 cm long. They often have teeth along the edge. They turn red in the autumn. The flowers are white in short compact racemes. They are bell shaped. They have a reddish streak. The flowers are 5 mm long. The fruit are large bluish black berries. They vary in colour and size. They can be 2-12 mm across. Several named cultivated varieties occur.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. They grow in open bogs and on exposed rocky soils and in dry peat soil. It can grow with a soil pH of 2.8-6.0. It can tolerate a wide range of temperatures. A snow covering helps protect the plant buds from heavy frost. It suits hardiness zones 2-8.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants grow naturally from seed. Traditionally areas with low-bush blueberries were burnt to reduce weeds and competing vegetation. The old dormant plants are pruned or burnt. Hay is spread over rough or rocky land to make burning easier. Plants can be also propagated by selecting an upright shoot from a rhizome.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The small berries are often picked using a dustpan like rake with fine teeth and this is pulled through the bushes. The fruit need to be harvested in fine weather when dry. Yields of 5,000 kg per hectare are possible.

NOTES

The berries are high in antioxidants.
They have health benefits.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Beckstrom-Sternberg, Stephen M., and James A. Duke. "The Foodplant Database." http://probe.nalusda.gov:8300/cgi-bin/browse/foodplantdb. (ACEDB version 4.0 - data version July 1994)

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 1039

Bull. Torrey Bot. Club 41:420. 1914 (As Vaccinium brittonii)

Elias, T.S. & Dykeman P.A., 1990, Edible Wild Plants. A North American Field guide. Sterling, New York p 164

Esperanca, M. J., 1988. Surviving in the wild. A glance at the wild plants and their uses. Vol. 1. p 318

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 96 (Also as Vaccinium lamarckii)

Fisk, J. R. & Hoover, E., 2015, Wild Fruits of Minnesota. A Field Guide. University of Minnesota p 31

Flowerdew, B., 2000, Complete Fruit Book. Kyle Cathie Ltd., London. p 66

Glowinski, L., 1999, The Complete Book of Fruit Growing in Australia. Lothian. p 158 (Also as Vaccinium lamarckii)

Harris, C.S. et al, 2014, Investigating Wild Berries as a Dietary Approach to Reducing the Formation of Advanced Glycation Endproducts: Chemical Correlates of In Vitro Antiglycation Activity. Plant Foods Hum Nutr 69:71–77

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 668 (As Vaccinium pensylvanicum)

Hort. kew. 2:11. 1789

INFOODS:FAO/INFOODS Databases

Jackes, D. A., 2007, Edible Forest Gardens

John, L., & Stevenson, V., 1979, The Complete Book of Fruit. Angus & Robertson p 84

Kermath, B. M., et al, 2014, Food Plants in the Americas: A survey of the domesticated, cultivated and wild plants used for Human food in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. On line draft. p 891

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 1734

MacKinnon, A., et al, 2009, Edible & Medicinal Plants of Canada. Lone Pine. p 114

Michael, P., 2007, Edible Wild Plants and Herbs. Grub Street. London. p 24

Moerman, D. F., 2010, Native American Ethnobotany. Timber Press. p 582

Plants for a Future database, The Field, Penpol, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0NG, UK. http://www.scs.leeds.ac.uk/pfaf/ (Also as Vaccinium brittonii)

Reis, S. V. and Lipp, F. L., 1982, New Plant Sources for Drugs and Foods from the New York Botanical Garden herbarium. Harvard. p 229 (As Vaccinium lamarckii)

Slocum, P.D. & Robinson, P., 1999, Water Gardening. Water Lilies and Lotuses. Timber Press. p 138

Smith, P.M., 1979, Blueberry, in Simmonds, N.W., (ed), Crop Plant Evolution. Longmans. London. p 306

Trehane, J., 2004, Blueberries, Cranberries and Other Vacciniums. Timber Press. p 87, 216

USDA, ARS, National Genetic Resources Program. Germplasm Resources Information Network - (GRIN). [Online Database] National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, Beltsville, Maryland. Available: www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/econ.pl (10 April 2000)

van Wyk, B., 2005, Food Plants of the World. An illustrated guide. Timber press. p 373
Bull. Torrey Bot. Club 71:180. 1943 (As Vaccinium lamarckii)

Wiersema, J. H. & Leon, B., 2013, World Economic Plants. A Standard Reference CRC Press. 2nd Ed. p 709

World Checklist of Useful Plant Species 2020. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/eea52fbd-6e02-49e0-a555-52600cda0773