Using, Storing and Preserving

Blueberries

Michigan-grown blueberries are available during July and August.

Recommended varieties
Bluecrop, Bluejay and Jersey are recommended for freezing and canning.

Food safety and storage
- Purchase fruits that are not bruised or damaged.
- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Do not wash blueberries before freezing when using a dry or unsweetened type of packing.
- Keep away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.
- For best quality and to preserve nutrients, preserve no more than your family can consume in one year.

How to preserve

Canning
Choose ripe, sweet berries with uniform color. Wash 1 or 2 quarts of berries at a time. Drain and stem, if necessary. Prepare and boil preferred syrup, if desired. Add 1/2 cup syrup, juice or water to each clean jar.

Yield

| 3/4 pound | = | 2 cups fresh, 1 pint frozen |
| 10-pound carton | = | 26 cups |
| 13 pints frozen | = | a canner load of 9 pints |
| 12 pounds | = | a canner load of 7 quarts |

Preparation and using syrup
Adding syrup to canned fruit helps to retain its flavor, color and shape. It does not prevent spoilage. The guidelines for preparing and using syrups offer a new "very light" syrup, which approximates the natural sugar content of many fruits.

Heat water and sugar together, stirring to dissolve sugar. Bring to a boil and pour hot syrup over raw fruits in jars. For hot packs, bring water and sugar to boil, add fruit, reheat to boil, and fill jars immediately.

Other sweeteners: Light corn syrups or mild-flavored honey may be used to replace up to half the table sugar called for in syrups.

Hot pack – Heat berries in boiling water for 30 seconds and drain. Fill jars and cover with hot liquid, leaving 1/2 inch headspace.

Raw pack – Fill jars with raw berries, shaking down gently while filling. Cover with hot syrup, juice or water, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Wipe jar rims, adjust lids and process.

Freezing
Select full-flavored, ripe berries. Remove leaves, stems, and immature or defective berries.

Syrup pack – Syrup pack is preferred for berries for cooking. Pack berries into freezer containers or bags and
cover with cold 50 percent syrup (1 cup water to 1 cup sugar), leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze.

**Dry pack** – Do not wash blueberries before freezing — washing results in a tougher skinned product. Pack berries into containers, leaving headspace. Berries can also be frozen first on a tray and then packed into containers as soon as they are frozen. Seal, label, date and freeze. Wash before using.

**Crushed or puréed** – Wash the blueberries. Crush, press berries through a fine sieve, or purée in a blender or food processor. Mix 1 to 1 1/8 cups of sugar with each quart (2 pounds) of crushed berries or purée. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Pack into containers, leaving headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze.

### References


So Easy to Preserve. 2006. University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

Find out more about Michigan Fresh at msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi_fresh.