



Blueberries

Type of Plant/Fruit:

- North America is the world's leading blueberry producer, accounting for nearly 90% of world production at the present time. The North American harvest runs from mid-April through early October, with peak harvest in July (also known as National Blueberry Month). Highbush blueberries are perennial, long-lived, deciduous, woody shrubs. They belong to the family Ericaceae, which includes such plants as cranberry, azalea, rhododendron, and heather. Blueberry plants flower in spring, with flowers at the tip of canes and the tip of the cluster opening first. They are pollinated by bees. Fruit development occurs for about 2 to 3 months after bloom, depending on cultivar, weather and plant vigor.

Origin and Native Uses:

- For centuries, blueberries were gathered from the forests and the bogs by Native Americans and consumed fresh and also preserved. The Northeast Native American tribes revered blueberries and much folklore developed around them. The blossom end of each berry, the calyx, forms the shape of a perfect five-pointed star. The elders of the tribe would tell stories of how the Great Spirit sent "star berries" to relieve the children's hunger during a famine.
- Parts of the blueberry plant were also used as medicine by Native Americans. A tea made from the leaves of the plant was thought to be good for the blood. Blueberry juice was used to support in the suppression of coughs; it also made an excellent dye for baskets and cloth. In food preparation, dried blueberries were added to stews, soups and meats. The dried berries were also crushed into a powder and rubbed into meat for flavor. Blueberries were used for medicinal purposes along with the leaves and roots. A beef jerky called Sautauthig (pronounced saw'-taw-teeg), was made with dried blueberries and meat and was consumed year round.

Form Used in Chiropractor's Choice:

- 100%, pure blueberry concentrated juice obtained directly from North American shrubs.

Primary Ingredients and Benefits:

- Based on data from the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (Boston, MA), blueberries are among the fruits with the highest antioxidant activity. Using a test called ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity), researchers have shown that a serving of fresh blueberries provided more antioxidant activity than many other fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Antioxidants are thought to help protect the body against the damaging effects of free radicals and certain conditions associated with the aging process. Fresh fruits, including blueberries, and vegetables contain many of these naturally occurring antioxidants such as Vitamins C and E. Just 1 cup of blueberries contains 14 mg of Vitamin C and 0.8 mg Vitamin E. In addition, blueberries contain anthocyanins and phenolics that can also act as antioxidants.
- Anthocyanin gives blueberries their color and might be the key component of the blueberry's antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Blueberries, along with other colorful fruits and vegetables, test high in their ability to subdue free radicals. These free radicals can damage cell membranes and DNA through a process known as oxidative stress.

References:

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