



Using, Storing and Preserving Blueberries

Michigan-grown blueberries are available during July and August.

Prepared by:

Laurie Messing
MSU Extension food safety educator

Reviewed by:

Linda Huyck and Lisa Treiber

Recommended varieties

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



Preparing 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

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

Lawn or garden questions?

Visit migarden.msu.edu.
Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

Using, Storing and Preserving Blueberries

Syrup type	Approx. % sugar	For 9-pt load		For 7-qt load		Fruits commonly packed in syrup
		Cups water	Cups sugar	Cups water	Cups sugar	
Very light	10	6-1/2	3/4	10-1/2	1-1/4	Approximates natural sugar levels in most fruits and adds the fewest calories.
Light	20	5-3/4	1-1/2	9	2-1/4	Very sweet fruit. Try a small amount the first time to see if your family likes it.
Medium	30	5-1/4	2-1/4	8-1/4	3-3/4	Sweet apples, sweet cherries, berries, grapes.
Heavy	40	5	3-1/4	7-3/4	5-1/4	Tart apples, apricots, sour cherries, gooseberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums.
Very heavy	50	4-1/4	4-1/4	6-1/2	6-3/4	Very sour fruit. Try a small amount the first time to see if your family likes it.

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

Food Preservation Series – Blueberries. 2006. Michigan State University Extension.
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.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Thomas G. Coon, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

Recommended process time (in minutes) for **berries, whole**, in a boiling-water canner at various altitudes.

Style of pack	Jar size	0–1,000 ft	1,001–3,000 ft	3,001–6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints or quarts	15	20	20	25
Raw	Pints	15	20	20	25
	Quarts	20	25	30	35

Process time in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time (minutes)	0–2,000 ft	2,001–4,000 ft	4,001–6,000 ft	6,001–8,000 ft
Hot	Pints or quarts	8	6	7	8	9
Raw	Pints	8	6	7	8	9
	Quarts	10	6	7	8	9

Process times in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time (min)	0–1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Pints or quarts	8	5	10
Raw	Pints	8	5	10
	Quarts	10	5	10

Let jars stand undisturbed on the counter for 24 hours, remove rings, check to make sure lids are sealed, wash jars, label, date and store.