



Using, Storing and Preserving

Blueberries

Michigan-grown blueberries are available during July and August.

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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.

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

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.

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.

Lawn or garden questions?

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Syrups for Use in Freezing Fruits

Type of Syrup	Percent Syrup*	Cups of Sugar **	Cups of Water	Yield of Syrup in Cups
Very light	10%	½	4	4 ½ cups
Light	20%	1	4	4 ¾ cups
Medium	30%	1 ¾	4	5 cups
Heavy	40%	2 ¾	4	5 1/3 cups
Very heavy	50%	4	4	6 cups

*Approximate

**In general, up to one-half of the sugar may be replaced by corn syrup or mild-flavored honey. A larger proportion of corn syrup may be used if a very bland, light-colored type is selected.

Syrups for Use in Canning Fruits

Type of Syrup	Percent Sugar*	Cups of Sugar** Per Quart Liquid	Yield of Syrup in Cups	How Syrup is Used Commercially
Very light	10%	½	4 ½	
Light	20%	1	4 ¾	Very sweet fruit
Medium	30%	1 ¾	5	Sweet apples, sweet cherries, berries, grapes
Heavy	40%	2 ¾	5 1/3	Tart apples, apricots, sour cherries, gooseberries, nectarines, pears, peaches, plums
Very heavy	50%	4	6	Very sour fruit

*Approximate

**In general, up to one-half of the sugar may be replaced by corn syrup or mild-flavored honey. A larger proportion of corn syrup may be used if a very bland, light-colored type is selected.

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.

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.	Over 6,000 ft.
Hot	Pints or quarts	15	20	20	25
Raw	Pints	15	20	20	25
	Quarts	20	25	30	35

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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.

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

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

Andress, Elizabeth and Judy A. Harrison. *So Easy to Preserve*. Bulletin 989, 6th Edition. Cooperative Extension University of Georgia, 2014.

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