

# First-Timer's Information Sheet



## A Brief History of The Berry Patch

We have seen growth, not only in our patch from one and one-half acres, but exciting growth in our circle of friends - our "pickers" - who spend a day, or maybe more, with us enjoying the beauty of God's creation through our farm, and the bounty of His goodness through His delightful fruit... the blueberry.

We began in 1975 with nothing but land (no roads, ponds or buildings), enthusiasm, and a vision. We planted peaches... they died. We planted raspberries... they died. The apples lived, but in spite of much prior analysis, had standing water under them, leaving them very subject to root rot. Two acres of blackberries flourished but had a sterility virus. They never produced a berry. Blueberries were never in our head, much less in our plan. We happened to look at a Blueberry Patch only to check out an irrigation system. One thing led to another, and we now are Missouri's largest blueberry grower. Our first picking year, 1980, we were still living in Lenexa, and commuting to the farm. Only days before the season we managed to burn our barn to the ground, so checkout was under the trees to the west of the garden. Exhausted (physically and financially) after the "fire season," we decided to abandon our "dream house" plans and build a combination "sale barn-shop-temporary residence," where the barn had been.



In 1981, the checkout was in the "house," which was an unfinished pole-barn with, homemade signs in unpainted windows. Our customers were all so supportive -- about the time we would be discouraged because we just didn't seem to be getting anywhere with our building, someone would tell us how much we had done since last year, and how far we had come. It was the wonderful encouragement that kept us going many days. Finally, in November, 1981, we moved in and by the next spring, 1982, it actually looked like someone (semi) civilized lived here. In those days we weighed the berries on the front porch and checkout was in our dining room.

With incredible help from Penny's mom and dad, our "barn house" became so comfortable we built a new barn rather than a house. In 1987, Tom left IBM and his daily commute to downtown KC, we improved our new barn (even added our air-conditioned, "indoor outhouse") and moved the sales area to the barn. We have been selling from there ever since.



Penny's Mom and Dad, Ed and Peggy Stevenson (PaPa and Nanny to our kids) the farming bug and bought the land north of us. Starting from scratch, they too built barn, house and planted 2 Acres of Strawberries. The Lord called Papa home Christmas of 1997. Papa left like a man. He tossed over 1000 bales to mulch the strawberries the week before he got sick. Since they lived next door for a number of years, the kids all got to have a great relationship with their grandpa. We miss not only his loving "patriarchship," but his incredible industry and dry wit.

In the Fall of 1991 we planted a couple thousand Daylilies and other perennials. We had learned that daylilies were impossible to kill, but after a freak early hard freeze, 3/4ths died and were replanted in the Spring of 1992. Don Fields, a pastor studying at Calvary, and his family helped us add a new shop in 1991, a larger warehouse and expanded sales area in the Spring of '92, and a beginning playground in '93. In '98, after three years, we're still working on God's Wilderness Trail, a different look at "nature."

Every year brings changes and improvements in some areas of our operation. The Lord willing you will see more improvements in the future as we expand and carry out our plans to serve you better. The best additions, however, have been our precious sons, David, September 22, 1987 (the Lord knew we were going to need the dining room to be more quiet) and Joshua, May 18, 1989 and daughter Grace, March 29, 1993.

With very little advertising, The Berry Patch has grown from around 100 to over 10,000 people enjoying a blueberry (and now strawberry) outing each year. We deeply appreciate the love our customers have shown us through your word-of-mouth advertising, your notes with submitted recipes, and particularly your loyal return each year. Thanks to all of you, and the Lord's ability to get around our "plans," our farming adventure has been and is a delightful excursion!

## Things to Do at The Berry Patch

**Pik-Ur Own Blueberries and Strawberries**

**Purchase We-Pik Blueberries and Strawberries**

**Enjoy Special Berry Patch Treats**

w Delicious Pies, Muffins, Coffee, Ice Cream

w Delicious Ice Cream Treats

w Homemade Blueberry and Regular Lemonade

w Pop and Juice Drinks

**Purchase Delicious Jams, Jellies, Syrups, Blueberry Drink Base**

**Let the Kids have a ball in Noah's Feed Lot & Playground**

**Ride the kids zipline**

**Educational/Recreational Wilderness Trail Tour**

**Enjoy Group Educational Tours of Strawberry or Blueberry Farm**

**Enjoy the Picnic Areas**

**Ride the Berry Train**

## The Berry Patch Basic Blueberry Recipes

To most folks "Blueberry" means "muffin" or "pie." But, in reality, blueberries are perhaps the most versatile fruit in God's creation. They are delicious in an infinite variety of dishes. Since most of us Mid-Westerners have never been able to afford a whole gallon of blueberries, we have no idea how to use them. Some "first-timers" leave with only a couple quarts and a recipe sheet. After trying truly fresh blueberries and a couple recipes, they inevitably return in about a week and get down to serious blueberry picking (which usually means several gallons)! You might call the recipes below "Blueberry Basics for greenhorns." If you haven't tried all of these, you haven't really eaten blueberries.

### BLUEBERRY CHEESE CAKE

Combine and beat until smooth:

2 - 8 oz pkg. cream cheese softened  
2 cups cottage cheese

add gradually and beat:

2 cups sugar

And then add and beat well:

4 eggs

Combine, add and blend well:

6 T. cornstarch                      1-1/2 T. lemon juice  
6 T. flour

Add and beat until smooth:

1/2 c. melted margarine, cooled  
1 pint sour cream

Pour into a 10" spring-form pan prepared with a graham cracker crust. Bake at 325° for 1 hour and 10 minutes, or until firm around edges. Turn off oven and let cheesecake remain in oven two hours. Remove from oven and let it cool completely before removing from pan. Chill and top with Blueberry Glaze (Below).

### BLUEBERRY GLAZE

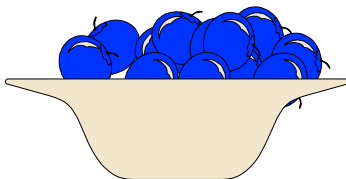
1/2 cup sugar                      1 T. lemon juice  
2 t. cornstarch                      2 c. blueberries  
1/2 cup water                      1/4 t. salt

Cook over medium heat until thick. Serve over cake, ice cream, pudding, pancakes, cheesecake.

### GRAHAM CRACKER CRUST

1-1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs  
1/4 cup melted margarine  
1 T. sugar

Combine all ingredients and press into the bottom of a 10" spring-form pan.



### BERRY PATCH BLUEBERRY PIE

Make a double crust recipe for 10" pie and fill with mixture below:



4 cups blueberries                      1/4 cup lemon juice  
1 cup sugar                                      1/3 cup cornstarch

Mix berries, sugar and lemon juice in a heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly until thick. Cool. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 400° for about 35 minutes or until crust is golden.

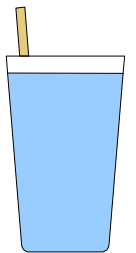
### BLUEBERRY JAM

6 cups blueberries                      1 box Sure-Jell  
2 T. lemon juice                              4 cups sugar

Crush blueberries. Measure 4 cups. Place in a six quart saucepan. Add water to make 4 cups of juice if necessary. Add lemon juice and Sure-Jell. Mix well. Bring mixture to a hard boil, stirring constantly. Add sugar all at once. Bring to a rolling boil. Boil hard one minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Skim off foam with a metal spoon. Stir and skim for five minutes longer. Pour into hot sterilized jars. Seal with paraffin or inner seals. Yield: Six 6 oz. jars.

### FROZEN BANANA BLUEBERRY SMOOTHIES

2 cups plain yogurt  
1/2 cup frozen blueberries  
3 frozen bananas, sliced in 1/4" circles  
1/4 cup pineapple juice



Combine all ingredients in a blender, with yogurt and juice in first on the bottom. Blend on a slow setting until the fruits are chopped, then blend on a high setting for about ten seconds, until pureed. Serve immediately. Also wonderful with strawberries, blackberries, raspberries or a combination. Note: To freeze bananas; freeze in heavy duty plastic bags or freezer containers. They will tend to discolor on the outside if stored longer than a month or two, but they are still good.

### BLUEBERRY SYRUP

4 cups blueberries                      1-1/4 to 1/12 cups sugar  
1 cup water

In 3 qt. saucepan, add berries and water and cook over high heat to boiling. Boil 2 minutes, mashing berries with a potato masher or large spoon. Add sugar. Cook over high heat until sugar dissolves and syrup comes to a rolling boil. Boil, stirring constantly, 30 seconds. Pour into four clean 8 oz. jars and seal. Cool; refrigerate up to two months. Makes 3-1/2 cups.

### CLYDE'S FAVORITE

When we first met our good friends and fellow blueberry growers, Clyde and Peggy Eubanks, they served us blueberries their "favorite" way of eating them. That why Tom calls this delicious dish "Clyde's Favorite."

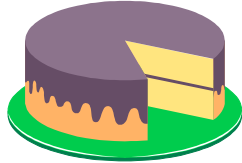
Blueberries - 1 bowl                      Dairy Sour Cream - a  
Brown Sugar - to taste                      generous plop

Stir it all up and EAT - Wonderful!!

## BLUEBERRIES 'N CHEESE COFFEE CAKE

1-1/4 cup sugar	1 t. salt
1/2 cup butter	3/4 cup milk
2 eggs	1/4 cup water
2-1/4 cup flour	2 cups blueberries
1 T. baking powder	1 t. grated lemon rind
1 - 8 oz. cream cheese (cubed)	

Cream sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Blend in eggs. Combine 2 cups flour, baking powder, and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with milk and water, mixing well after each addition. Toss blueberries with 1/4 cup flour; fold into batter with cream cheese and lemon rind. Pour into greased and floured 13 x 9 pan.



### Topping:

1/4 cup sugar	2 T. butter
1 t. grated lemon rind	1/4 cup flour

Combine topping ingredients, cutting in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over batter. Bake at 350° one hour.

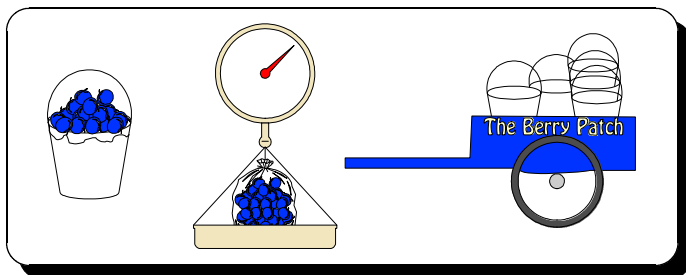
## HINTS FOR BLUEBERRY PANCAKES

Use your favorite batter. Wait until you pour the batter on the griddle. Then sprinkle frozen blueberries into the cake before it cooks too firm. This way the berries will not stick to the griddle and will be thawed when the pancake is done. For the perfect topping, use **The Berry Patch Blueberry Syrup** or **Blueberry Drink Base**.



## RECIPE CONTEST

Here at The Berry Patch we have an annual recipe contest where you can win a free gallon of U-Pick blueberries for sharing your favorite recipe with us. If your recipe is chosen for our annual recipe sheet, you win! We are always on the lookout for wonderful ways to use blueberries, so, whether original or not, share your good ideas and recipes with us. Our customers are the best cooks anywhere. Just send entries to: The Berry Patch Recipe Contest, 22509 South State Line Road, Cleveland, Mo. 64734. Deadline is January 1 (we need time to test the recipes).



## Picking Blueberries for Fun & Profit

Like playing golf or tennis, picking berries will be even more fun if you know a little about it. **Neither Blueberries nor Strawberries Ripen all their fruit at once.** Both ripen their fruit over three or four weeks, with different varieties starting at different dates, although there is much overlap. Ripe fruit will not hang very long. If it rots, it falls. We don't get to sell it and you don't get to eat it. Also, overripe fruit attracts a variety of pests reducing the quality of the outing for everyone. This means each bush must be picked about four times each season. Between pickings it needs several days rest to properly ripen more berries. Berries may look ripe, but they will not be truly ripe.

Early in the season you will see some bushes with no ripe berries, and some bushes with few ripe berries and many green ones. This does not mean we opened too early. It means you are in the early season. The Lord asked for our tithe out of "the first fruits." This is one more proof that He knows what He's doing, the first fruits are usually the largest and nicest. Near the end of the season (mid to late August), only late varieties will have berries. This does not mean "bad picking," but does mean that the field will not be as impressive because the plants in the adjoining row may have no berries left. Nor does it mean truly inferior fruit, but it won't be as pretty as the "first fruits" of the season.

**A long season requires many varieties.** Since a given variety of blueberry tends to ripen all its fruit in 3 or 4 weeks, we planted about 4 varieties of strawberries and 10 varieties of blueberries. That helps us achieve a picking season that can last as long from Late May until the end of August.

**Yes, you can pick "for profit."** Not only many children, but families, home school families, church groups, etc., have picked for profit. For information, inquire at the Check In counter, or leave a message after *The Picking Report*.

### The Berry Patch Picking Rules:

To find the best picking you would have to walk 3 miles in the strawberries or about 10 miles in the blueberries. For these reasons, we divide the fields into "Patches" and open a patch or two at once, reducing the "hunt" and helping insure a high percentage of the crop is picked. Everyone picks the "open" patch(es). We monitor the field to determine when it is time to open the next patch. The next patch we open will be the one that was least recently picked.

While this idea has substantially improved picking for everyone, it is more difficult to manage than you might think. If we close a patch too soon, days may elapse before we get back to it allowing fruit to fall. But, if we wait too long to open a new patch, obviously the picking will not be as good for those who are picking the old one at the end. At first we had a few "cheaters, grumblers and complainers" (and still have one or two a year). Because of people like this, many of the U-Pik operators we know have come to hate their own customers... more than a few get out of the business. But we have heeded the Scriptures "He who spares the rod, hates his son," and "The Lord disciplines those whom he loves." In short, we have enforced the rules firmly, in a spirit of love. The vast majority of our customers have "caught the spirit," and the spirit of grumbling and complaining has virtually disappeared from our patch, and been replaced by a spirit of joy. PTL! Look and listen around you while in the field. See for yourself whether the Lord knows what He is talking about.



# BLUEBERRIES -- THE ALL-AMERICAN BERRY

**Blueberries are indigenous to North America** and only on this continent are they grown in quantity as a commercial crop. The blueberry's European cousin, the bilberry, is produced in commercial quantities but production is rapidly declining and American blueberries are now filling the void.

**The American Indians delighted in them** and marked the beginning of summer with the appearance of the first blueberries. When the explorers and settlers arrived on the North American Continent they found the native Indians using blueberries as an integral part of their food supply.

**The Pilgrims were greeted with blueberries** when they first arrived on New England shores. Friendly Indians met them with dried blueberries in huge wicker baskets. History records that one of the items of food that helped the tiny band to survive that terrible first winter was the gift of blueberries.

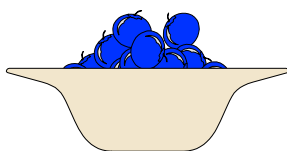
**Blueberries are nature's convenience food.** They need no peeling, coring or pitting. Only washing is required before using. Blueberries are nutritious as well as delicious. On taste alone, these beautiful berries would win a place of favor on anybody's table.

**Blueberries are colorful.** They add a special touch to any dish, especially a fruit salad. Blueberries in a salad will seldom go without notice by your family and guests.

**Blueberries are nutritious.** In addition to their delicious flavor, it is good to know that something that tastes and looks so good is also good for you. Of all the berries, blueberries rank first in Vitamin A and second in food energy. They contain Vitamin C and iron, and supply trace minerals such as calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium to the diet. Blueberries are low in calories. A half cup of blueberries contains only 42 calories; in diabetic diets this amount is equivalent to one fruit exchange.

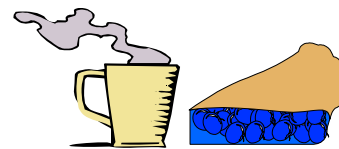
**Blueberries keep longer than any other berry** when refrigerated. If kept dry, they will maintain their goodness under refrigeration for two weeks. However, they are highly perishable at room temperature, and will mold if wet. Berries should not be washed until ready for use.

**Blueberries freeze beautifully.** By putting blueberries directly into the freezer in gallon or smaller bags, without washing them, exact amounts can be dipped out for your various recipes. They freeze like little blue marbles, each separate and individual. Again, do not wash until ready to use. Washed blueberries will freeze into a giant ice cube and be more mushy when thawed.

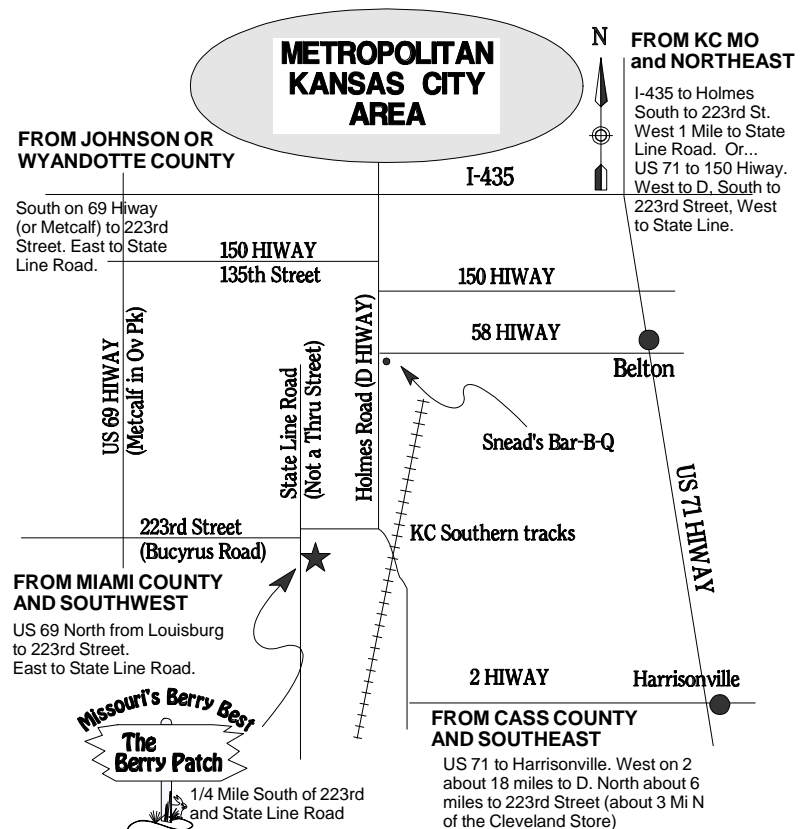


Thanks for joining us at **The Berry Patch**. We pray your visit will be a present blessing and a treasured memory. Remember our normal picking season is about May 15 to June 15 for strawberries, June 15 to August 31 for blueberries. Call "The Picking Report," (816) 618-3771 } from about May 10 on for details. We hope to see you back each June, July and August. Until then, may the Love of Jesus fill your life and empower your actions,

*Tom and Penny  
David, Joshua and Grace Willis  
and Peg Stevenson (Nanny)*



## DIRECTIONS TO THE BERRY PATCH



**Wholesome Family Fun ... Fellowship ... Delicious and Nutritious Food**