

Version:1.0 StartHTML:0000000181 EndHTML:0000005355 StartFragment:0000002364
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SourceURL:file:///localhost/Users/computer/Desktop/obits/barefootfarmer.doc Blueberries grow well in Tennessee. There is a big patch of Hwy 231 before the bridge over the Cumberland River, and one across from the winery in Macon County. We have a small patch for our own use, but just planted another row on the farm.

A friend in Summertown invited me over to dig some plugs from an old patch near where he lives. New shoots were coming up everywhere, and in a few hours we had about 50 of them in pots. A few dozen came up bare root with long roots on them, and I am trying to make root cuttings for plants later on. Agriculture is free. I want to learn how to propagate fruits and berries so folks don't have to pay exhorborant prices to get an orchard started. The apple and pear trees I graft cost me less than a dollar each, but it often costs \$10 or \$20 for a fruit tree. I'm going to figure out how to start blueberry plants, too.

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The soil for a successful blueberry patch cannot be limey. Unlike most crops, they require an acid soil. We added peat moss to the holes we dug, which were about five feet apart. We also gave each hole a half cup of elemental sulfur. Sulfur lowers the Ph of soil.

A five gallon bucket of compost was incorporated into each hole by mixing it all up with a digging fork. Then I emptied the pots and put the litter berry plants in the good looking soil and firmed them in with my feet. A splash of water from the nearby pond finishes the transplanting. Perrenial

weeds, particularly Bermuda grass, are the biggest problem for us in our present patch. We mulch them because the blueberries love to grow with high organic matter around their roots. But the wirey roots of the Bermuda grass invade the mulch and try to smother the bushes. It's a battle trying to keep the invasive grasses out of the berry patch.

The new row of blueberries is in the onion field. I'll be able to cultivate on either side of them. I hope to keep the grasses under control by growing a row of a cultivated crop, like onions, on either side of the berry row.

Blueberries

Tuesday, April 6, 2010

Grapes are propagated by taking cuttings from last year's growth and burying them deeply, leaving one bud above ground level. Blackberries bend their long arching branches back into the soil and the tips make roots there. We clip them off and dig up the new plant. Raspberries sprout up new plants in the patch, and we thin them out by digging up plants where they are real thick.

Fruit is an important part of our diet. It has vitamin C and tastes so good. Excess can be made into jam or wine, and we often freeze some for blueberry pancakes or pies in the off season. Wild blueberries thrive in Tennessee, and this observation tells us that we live in a good place to grow other berries, too.