

# What's in Season from the Garden State

Bi-weekly Highlights from Rutgers Cooperative Extension

June 19, 2006



## A Legend from the New Jersey Pine Barrens: This One is True and it's Blue

The first commercial crop of blueberries was borne from the wild blueberry of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. The breeder who pioneered this effort was a New Jersey woman farmer. Her legacy lives on as research continues today at the Rutgers Marucci Blueberry and Cranberry Research Center with scientist Amy Howell uncovering the nutritional secrets of the blueberry. Read on at: <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/jersey-blues.asp>

## Superfood Defined

In the last issue we mentioned two New Jersey crops that qualify as "superfoods": asparagus and strawberries. Add another Jersey crop to the list: blueberries. Just what exactly is a "superfood"? Kathleen Morgan, Chair of Rutgers Cooperative Extension Department of Family & Community Health Sciences explains that "Superfoods are foods that provide nutrition beyond the usual nutrients like vitamins A or C and can play a role in promoting health and reducing the risk of disease, like heart disease or cancer. Superfoods fit neatly into a daily prescription for healthy eating when eaten in appropriate amounts because they contain high amounts of phytonutrients and antioxidants. Blueberries are one of the leaders of the pack in this area."

Want to get the health benefits of Jersey Fresh blueberries all year round? Put them in the freezer right in their plastic containers. They can later be rinsed and ready to use for muffins, pancakes or compote. Here's a recipe for a healthy 5-minute compote: <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/jersey-fruit-compote.asp>

## A Case of the Jersey Blues

What happens when you get together a bunch of New Jersey blueberry growers, businesses, Farm Bureau, Blueberry Advisory Council and Rutgers University? You get a case of the Jersey Blues – that is, Jersey Blues Blueberry Iced Tea. A truly homegrown product – it's even bottled in New Jersey glassware. No high fructose corn sweetener is used in this iced tea and it is also available unsweetened. You can find Jersey Blues at farmstands, Wegmans and some natural food markets. Go to (note the "where to find" section is not current, so call first to see if they have it):

[http://www.herbalist-chemist.com/blueberry/jersey\\_bluestm\\_iced\\_tea.htm](http://www.herbalist-chemist.com/blueberry/jersey_bluestm_iced_tea.htm).

*Continued on page 2*



## New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Jersey Fresh Availability Report

### Current:

Arugula and Kale  
Baby Arugula & Baby Spinach  
Basil  
Beets  
Blueberries  
Cabbage  
Cilantro/Dill/Parsley  
Collards

Cucumbers  
Escarole & Endive  
Leeks  
Lettuce  
Peas  
Radishes  
Spinach  
Squash - yellow and zucchini  
Strawberries - finishing up

Tomatoes - just starting  
Swiss Chard  
Turnips

### Forecast (start date):

Cantalopes - late June/early July  
Eggplant - 2nd - 3rd week of July  
Peaches/Nectarines - mid-July  
Peppers - end of June/early July  
Sweet corn - late June



Where to find Jersey Fresh? Ask for it where you shop or dine or go to <http://www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov>



To receive these reports by e-mail: [njfarmfresh@rcr.rutgers.edu](mailto:njfarmfresh@rcr.rutgers.edu)  
Web: <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu>  
For your county Rutgers Cooperative Extension office go to:  
<http://www.rcr.rutgers.edu/county>

**Jersey Fresh ORGANIC Blueberries?**

According to Rutgers Cooperative Extension Agricultural Agent Bill Sciarappa, "Rutgers Cooperative Extension has fostered the development of an emerging new market on the east coast. In New Jersey commercial organic blueberry production has increased from 0 to almost 200 acres in six years. We need consumer support in the marketplace to double and triple this farm production which will help sustain organic certified growers, improve the environment and provide a truly nutritious food. Recent agricultural and medical publications indicate that there are more beneficial antioxidants per gram in such organic small fruit compared to conventional production." Read more at: <http://www.newfarm.org/features/0803/NJ%20blue/index.shtml>



In the photo to the left, this organic blueberry grower has applied natural cranberry compost to the field - converting food waste into fertilizer instead of landfilling. The "recipe" for this compost was developed by Rutgers Cooperative Extension Specialist in Solid Waste Management Uta Krogmann, to assist New Jersey cranberry growers in disposing of cranberry waste.

Some retailers that sell organic berries may have local blueberries, but production is still small. To find organic blueberry growers go to Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey's website at: <http://www.nofanj.org>. Also check the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's website, where a few of the pick-your-own blueberry farms are organic: <http://www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov>.



**Notes from the Field**

New Jersey's early season blueberry variety is Duke (left). Thousands of acres of blueberries in New Jersey use Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a practice that is ecologically harmonious with the delicate ecosystem of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. In the photo below, a pheromone trap is used to lure insect pests.



*Garden State Tidbit:* New Jersey is the largest fresh market highbush blueberry supplier in the nation and is also home to the largest blueberry family farm in the US: Atlantic Blueberry Company in Hammonton, owned by the Galletta family.



To receive these reports by e-mail: [njfarmfresh@rcrc.rutgers.edu](mailto:njfarmfresh@rcrc.rutgers.edu)  
 Web: <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu>  
 For your county Rutgers Cooperative Extension office go to:  
<http://www.rcrc.rutgers.edu/county>