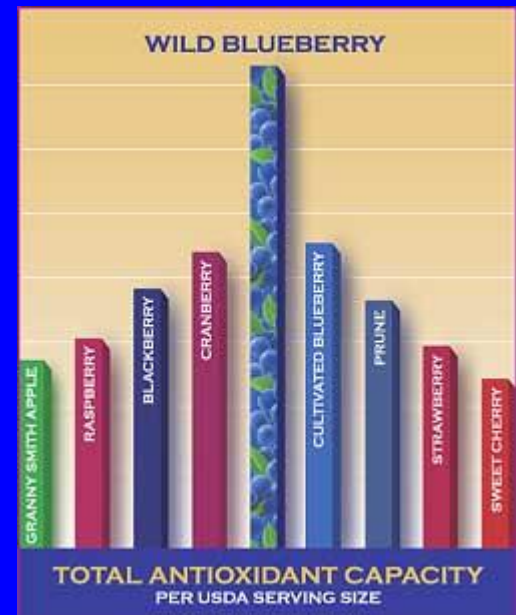


Blueberries – A Phytonutrient superstar

Blueberries are a nutrient rich fruit containing antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds particularly anthocyanins, proanthocyanins, flavanols and tannins that are reported to be effective in reducing cholesterol and other blood lipids, thereby reducing the risks of cardiovascular disease. Blueberry consumption is also associated with reducing the growth of some types of cancers, alleviating the cognitive decline seen in Alzheimer's patients, lowering the severity of stroke damage and, like cranberries, blueberries contain compounds that prevent the adhesion of bacteria responsible for urinary tract infections.



Source www.wildberries.com

Many of these studies were conducted using the cultivated “Highbush” blueberry. However, the content of polyphenol antioxidants and anthocyanins in wild-derived “Lowbush” blueberries exceeds the values found in the cultivated variety. However the total anti-oxidant capacity of both wild and cultivated blueberries exceed that of similar serving sizes of strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, apples and sweet cherries. Wild blueberries are smaller than the cultivated ones and are prized for their intense color and flavor. In North America, the most common cultivated Highbush blueberry is the Northern Highbush Blueberry and more heat tolerant hybrids are collectively known as the Southern Highbush Blueberry. However, within each of these two species are several cultivars, each of which has a unique and distinctive flavor.

Maine produces 25% of all blueberries in North America, making it the largest producer in the world. The majority of the 60,000 acres used for agriculture were propagated from natural lowbush plants that occur naturally in the coastal regions. In Canada, the provinces of Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are significant producers of wild blueberries.

In the United States, a significant production of cultivated highbush blueberries occurs in Oregon, Washington, Michigan, New Jersey and North Carolina.

Internationally, Highbush blueberries introduced to Germany and the Netherlands in the 1930's have since spread to Poland, Italy and the Mediterranean regions of Europe. In the Southern hemisphere, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa are increasing their production and export capacity.

Thus, blueberries are generally available year-round. The anti-oxidative and inflammatory anthocyanins, proanthocyanins and flavanols in blueberries are found in fresh and frozen blueberries but not found in many processed blueberry containing foods. A single serving of fresh highbush blueberries is high in manganese (20% DV), copper (4% DV), folate (2.3% DV), potassium, and Vitamins C and E, and is associated with a low glycemic load per serving. Blueberries are naturally low in sodium and fat.