



# Care of your blueberry buffer

## Watering

- When first planted, blueberries like daily watering for several days. Blueberries prefer soil that is moist but not saturated.
- In general, blueberries need about 1 – 3” of water per week, from blossom time to harvest. If there isn’t enough rain, you should water the plants once or twice a week. (Use a rain gauge to see how much rain has fallen each week.)



## Soil and Nutrients

- During the first year of your blueberry’s life, keep the area around the plant weeded to reduce competition for nutrients.
- Some gardeners remove the plant’s blossoms in the year it is planted, to encourage root growth rather than fruit production.
- After 1-2 years you can add compost, organic fertilizer without phosphorus, and/or pine-needle or other acid mulch around the plant.
- After 1-2 years, if your soil is not naturally acid, you can add sulphur or a blueberry soil amendment around the plant. Consider testing the pH of your soil.

## Pruning

- You do not need to prune your blueberry bush at planting time, other than removing damaged branches. However, after the plant is 5-7 years old, you can prune in January – March, when the plant is dormant.
- Blueberries produce fruit on 1-year old wood. Here are some pruning tips:
  - Keep the bush fairly open. Open bushes promote better air circulation (less disease) and good light penetration to improve fruit bud set for next year’s crop.
  - After pruning, there generally should be an equal number of 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-year-old canes. If you remove the oldest, unproductive canes, and thin to a few of the best shoots at the base (called “whips”), you will be renewing the bush each year.

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds