



Honeyberry Culture Tips

The taste of honeyberries has been compared to blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and black currants. They can be eaten fresh, baked into pies, or made into jams or jellies. They are an excellent source of antioxidants and Vitamin C. And they produce fruit early, often two weeks before strawberries.

The honeyberry bush requires space! A mature bush will be 4 to 5 ft. high and 4 to 5 ft. wide. If planting in rows, your rows should be at least 14 ft. apart from center to center, so that you will not have trouble collecting berries and pruning branches. The honeyberry is hardy to zone 3, so is ideal for central Indiana. Bushes grow well in most soils, but the ideal environment is well-drained soil, with a pH of 6.5, although they will grow in a pH range of 5 to 8.

Because the honeyberry is a shallow-rooted plant (roots are in the top 5-7 inches of soil), organic mulch is beneficial for maintaining uniform soil moisture, reducing soil temperature, and controlling weeds. Apply mulch four inches deep and 24-36 inches around honeyberry bushes. Rows should run south to north, and the plants should receive at least six hours of sun a day. During the growing season, try to fertilize three times: early spring, mid-May, and October. Distribute fertilizer evenly within the root zone and avoid concentrating fertilizer near the crown of the plant.

Pruning

Fruit is produced on one-year-old wood. The largest berries are produced on the most vigorous wood, so a good supply of strong, one-year-old wood is desirable. Pruning new bushes is recommended ONLY to remove any dead or dying parts of branches. After the fifth year, prune the bushes annually. Prune in late winter while bushes are dormant, and before the buds swell. Keep the bush fairly open by cutting out any weak, old stems that no longer produce strong young wood. Keep four to six of the vigorous older stems and one to two strong new shoots per mature bush.

Pollination

Honeyberries require cross-pollination because the male and female reproductive organs develop at different times. The variety 'Borealis' is pollinated by the variety 'Tundra.' It is always beneficial to encourage bees (even wild bees) to aid in pollination.

A Watering Tip: Once established, honeyberries are tolerant of heat and drought. But young plants need frequent watering during hot, dry periods. We prefer a drip system rather than a sprinkler to irrigate your plants. With a drip system, only the planted area is watered—which means that weed development between rows is reduced.