

BERRIES

Spanish: bayas or berries **Russian:** yagody (ягоды) **Vietnamese:** quả beri

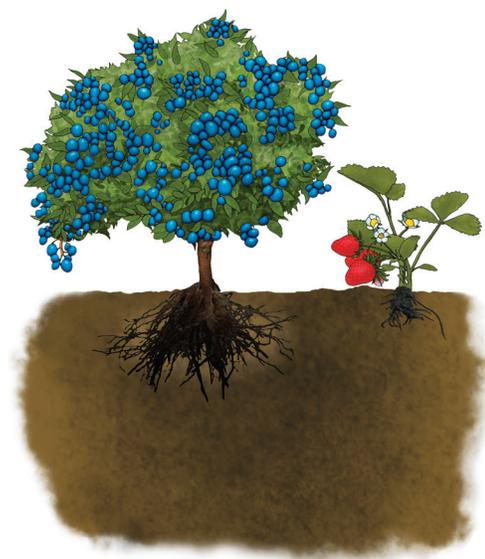
In Oregon, strawberries are the first to appear at markets and in gardens, followed by blueberries, raspberries, marionberries and blackberries. Depending on the variety, berry seasons can last anywhere from two weeks starting in late spring to two months ending in October. The popular blackberry – sometimes seen as invasive weed – is native to England and first appeared in Oregon in the mid-1800's. Wild varieties of raspberries have been enjoyed since prehistoric times; they were first cultivated in England and France in the 1600's. Native Americans taught colonists how to preserve blueberries for the winter by drying them in the summer sun. California is now the leader in berry production, thanks to settlers, Native Americans, and animals bringing them west and south. The best place to find ripe and fresh berries is at your summer farmers' markets.



FIND OUT MORE:

http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Spring/021712/Ed_news_Berries_Final.pdf

FROM SEED TO PLATE



Raspberries and blackberries: both perennials, these berries have a strong underground network of roots and stems that spread and expand each season to ensure continued fruit. Part of the rose family, they have brambly canes that shoot up at the beginning of each season with fresh green stems. There are four colors of raspberries: gold, black, purple, and red. Both berries are not considered true berries because they grow aggregated clusters of many small fruits called drupelets held together by tiny hairs.

Blueberries: a perennial, blueberries grow as a bush and can become up to 12 feet tall. Harvesting can happen throughout the season as berries don't all mature at the same time. They take longer to establish in a garden, and start producing fruit in the 3rd or 4th season. Once established, they will continue to produce for more than 20 years. Blueberries are part of the heath family, which includes azaleas, rhododendrons and cranberries. There are over 450 species around the world, many of them wild.

Strawberries: Strawberries are perennials, but the frequency and quality of fruit production decreases as the plants age. They are most prolific in their 2nd and 3rd years, after which they decline in production and flavor. There are many varieties to choose from that affect the length of production, size of fruit, and flavor. It is common for gardeners to grow more than one type of strawberry in order to extend the harvesting season and allow for a range of flavors.

FIND OUT MORE:

http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Spring/021712/Ed_news_Berries_Final.pdf
<http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/edComm/pdf/BUL/BUL0812.pdf>

DID YOU KNOW?

Marionberries are a variety of blackberries! They were developed in Oregon in 1956, and are now the leading cultivar of blackberries in the state. Boysenberries are also a type of blackberry developed by Rudolph Boysen in the 1930's.

IN THE GARDEN: STRAWBERRIES



SUN: Full sun



WATER: Strawberries like moist, but well drained soils. Make sure to maintain soil moisture.



SOIL: Strawberries are able to grow in many soil types, but will thrive in well drained, fertile soil high in organic matter.



SEEDS: Strawberries are transplanted from other gardens or from a nursery.



PLANT: Hill or mound the soil at least enough for the roots and crown to maintain an upright and straight position. Plants should be 8-20 inches apart from each other (see instructions with type of plant). **Note:** Avoid planting strawberries where tomatoes, potatoes or sod was recently grown.



SPACE: Maintain 30-36 inches of space between rows.



CARE: Strawberries produce runners that will re-root to produce more plants for the next season. During the first season, remove the runners that are produced. Some gardeners remove the flowers of the plant during the first season to encourage increased production once the plant has grown to a mature size.



HARVEST: Strawberries are ready to harvest when fully red.

FIND OUT MORE:

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1424.html>

STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Choose berries that are not mushy or moldy.
- Choose fresh blueberries that are plump and have a solid, dark blue color. Refrigerate for up to two weeks.
- Choose fresh raspberries that are bright and evenly colored. Refrigerate for up to three days.
- Select fresh blackberries that are dry and shiny, without any green or red colors. Refrigerate for up to three days.
- Wash berries just before serving.
- Eat fresh berries within a week.
- Frozen berries will last for 6 months to a year in the freezer. To freeze berries (especially raspberries, blackberries, and marionberries), place them on a cookie sheet with space between each berry. Once frozen, lightly move the berries into a bag to store. This prevents the berries from sticking together and forming a solid, frozen mass.
- Winter: Buy berries frozen, dried or in jam.
- Summer: Buy fresh berries at your local farmers market or supermarket. Or, pick your own! Visit tricountyfarm.org to find a u-pick berry farm near you.

FIND OUT MORE:

<http://pickyourown.org>

[/freezingblueberries.htm](http://freezingblueberries.htm)

http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Spring/Berries/Berries_Fam.pdf

IN THE KITCHEN

Berries are delicious! Eat them raw after a gentle rinsing; add them to a pie crust or a crisp recipe for a summer treat; sprinkle them on yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal to add some fresh sweetness and color; lightly boil in a bit of water, sugar and spices to make a syrup you can pour over pancakes or waffles; or take them from the freezer, combine with yogurt or milk, and blend up for a morning smoothie on the go.

Try the classroom recipe at home, with this family-size version:

BERRY YOGURT TREAT (AN EASY BREAKFAST OR SNACK)

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

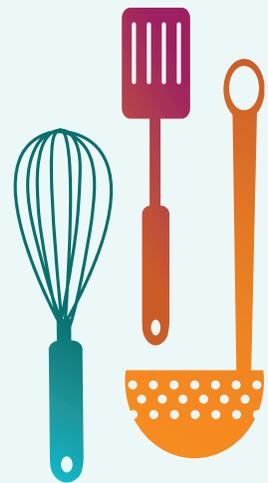
1 bag of frozen mixed berries, thawed in the refrigerator
1 quart of low-fat yogurt (plain, vanilla, or honey)
Granola (optional)
Honey (optional)

TO MAKE IN A GLASS:

Use a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt for young children. Use about a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of berries per serving. Place a few spoonfuls of yogurt in the bottom of a small glass. Top with a few spoonfuls of berries. If using plain yogurt, add a small amount of honey (optional). Add a few more spoonfuls of yogurt. Continue layering yogurt and berries until you the glass is almost full. Top with a little granola, if desired.

TO MAKE IN A BOWL:

Follow the directions above in a small bowl instead of a small glass. Use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt for young children. Use about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of berries.



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The family newsletter for berries can be sent home at the beginning of the month. The newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Russian. Print the first page only, or add photos and stories to the second page and print both sides for families.



GET PARENTS' ATTENTION!

- Attach the newsletter to the child by attaching a string of yarn to the paper and making a newsletter “necklace” or pinning the newsletter to an article of clothing.
- Attach the newsletter to a drawing or other piece of artwork created by the child
- Get a set of “Ask me about ____” stickers or nametags, or use blank nametag stickers to draw attention to the fruit or vegetable of the month. Send each child home with an “Ask me about berries!” sticker for the berries month.
- Offer tastes of the recipe at the month at a parent meeting, or when parents pick up their children from your site.

BERRY VARIETIES



Blueberries • Blackberries • Cranberries • Raspberries • Strawberries



ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family newsletters engage families as partners in helping children to develop healthy eating habits. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.