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PLANTING, FERTILIZATION AND CULTIVATION OF BLUEBERRIES

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Adaptation: The rabbiteye blueberry (*Vaccinium ashei*) is native to northern Florida, southern Georgia, and adjacent areas and is well adapted as a cultivated crop. It has been successfully grown from the latitude of northern Florida to that of the lower Piedmont area of Georgia.

Varieties: Among the older varieties selected from the wild were Myers, Hagood, Clara, Black Giant, Walker, and Ethel. Some of the newer varieties are Callaway, Coastal, Homebell, and Tifblue.

Callaway grows best on fairly moist soil. It is generally a slow starter but grows well after becoming established. Fruits are medium to large in size, of medium blue color and excellent quality.

Coastal is more vigorous than Callaway, producing large fruits of medium blue color and good quality.

Homebell is one of the most vigorous rabbiteye blueberries. It has grown rapidly in most locations tested and has been highly productive. Fruits are medium large in size, medium light blue in color, and of good quality.

Tifblue is moderately vigorous, grows more upright than most varieties and produces relatively few shoots. Fruits are of medium to large size, light blue in color, and of good quality.

Soil Requirements: Norfolk loamy sand and similar types of soil are preferable. Deep sand and other soils of low fertility are poorly adapted. Rabbiteye blueberries will grow on high, well-drained land and also on low-lying, moist soils but will not survive in excessively wet or water-logged areas. Soils that are well drained, productive, liberally supplied with humus, and retentive of moisture are ideal for this crop. Areas that tend to be too wet during rainy seasons may prove satisfactory if slightly ridged.

Acidity: Soil acidity is an important factor in blueberry culture. Apparently, the rabbiteye type thrives best in a pH ranging from 4.0 to 5.0. Facilities for testing soil are available at the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, Georgia.

Preparation of Land: The land on which blueberries are to be planted should be cleared of all native growth, and the soil should be thoroughly pulverized by harrowing.

Shade: Plants will survive in medium to light shade, but maximum production and normal growth habits are obtained only in full sun.

