

Berries and Small Berry-size Fruit for the San Francisco Bay Area

What to CONSIDER when choosing:

1. **What do you like to eat** and what are you interested in trying to grow?
2. **Cross pollination:** Required for most blueberries, honeyberries & supposedly all seaberries
3. **Chill hours:** (from Raintree & UC Publication # 8261) Blueberries (100-800 hrs), currants & gooseberries (800-1500 but I can always fruit currants) some Juneberries (400-800?) blackberries (200-800), raspberries (700-800- but I get lots), strawberries (200-300), hardy kiwi (300-800).
4. **Sun at least 6 hours/day:** Most fruit best in full sun but many can take part shade -- currants, serviceberries, strawberries, gooseberries, goji, some mahonia -- and some best in some shade -- gold raspberries, Chilean guava -- and some in mostly shade -- wild evergreen huckleberries.
5. **Soil:** Blueberries must have acid soil & humus, many berries need well drained soil; many raspberries need well drained & rich soil; poor soils ok for seaberry; fast drainage needed for desert mahonia.
6. **Temperature:** -- **Cool summers** - Ollieberry, Marionberries & some other blackberries need summers below 85 degrees, many raspberries; **OR hot enough** to sweeten fruit-- some kinds of blackberries.
7. **Frost free area:** Surinam cherry.
8. **Amount of work:** Pruning (all cane berries, mulberry, some bush berries), protecting from birds & frost, heat protection or shading, wind protection (hardy kiwis), building raised mounds for drainage, making acidic soil (blueberries, partially for evergreen huckleberry).
9. **Water:** Berries need more, and more frequently than fruit trees. Blueberries and evergreen huckleberry take more than others. Crandall currant, seaberry, eleagnus & goji take less than others.
10. **Thorns or prickles:** Gooseberries, many in blackberry family, seaberry; Prickly leaves on mahonia.
11. **When and how much fruit do you want:** Ripen all at once to process (freeze, can, dry, make jam) OR ripen over a long time to eat fresh. Is this berry going to fruit when you typically take your vacation?
12. **Disease & insect resistance:** For most berries, not a problem in our climate. But many raspberries get a virus -- generally stunted bushes after several years. Strawberries -- mold. Serviceberries -- rust but mostly on wild plants. Black currants -- rust. Gooseberries -- worms.
13. **Propagate easily:** to add more or to give to friends. Runners, roots, seeds, cuttings, grafting.

KEY

Bold type on fruit name = relatively easy care and reliable source of fruit.

Pick = months fruit is available i.e. May = 5 (this includes months with just a few fruit and extremes from years of unusual weather).

X-Pol = x -- must be cross pollinated with another variety; some/most tell how many kinds need x-pol; more F – more fruit with x-pol; (m & f) both male & female plants needed for x-pol.

Var = usually use grafted plants or named varieties to have tastier fruit, produce sooner.

Prune = x marked plants need a lot of yearly pruning; if N, usually no pruning needed. Many do well with just summer pruning.



Berries on perennial plants

Fruit	Pick	X-Pol	Var	Prune	Other
Strawberry, hybrids	3-11		x		needs water; light rich soil best; ants and slugs a problem; some are June bearing, others everbearing; sets many runners; some take more heat; propagate from seed or runners
Strawberry, Alpine	2-12			N	ok in drier soil than regular strawberry; light soil, humus best; will self seed, light crops; more difficult in hot areas
Strawberry, Musk	6	More F			very sweet; more productive after 2 years; better production with a male strawberry

Cane berries (all do better with water & humus-rich soil; birds love fruit)

Fruit	Pick	X-Pol	Var	Prune	Other
Bababerry	5-10			x	raspberry that will take extremes of heat and cold
Blackberry & related	5-10		x	x	some named varieties produce over a long time; Boysen, Logan, Marion & Ollalie are other crosses with raspberries; some thornless; some need cross pollination; wide range of soil types; big range of flavors; root from runners
Ollalieberry	5-6			x	intense, excellent flavor; early fruit; long canes; cool areas good
Raspberry, red	5-11		x	x	spreads with ample water; small prickles on stems; various different flavors; some are everbearing, others are single crop in summer, some bear over a much longer season; a few withstand soggy soil; root from root suckers
Raspberry, yellow	5-10		x	x	part shade & cooler summers best; prickly stem; takes more water; fragile fruit; unusually sweet flavor



Bush berries

Fruit	Pick	X-Pol	Var	Prune	Other
Blueberry	6-9	most	x		need acid soil; most need good drainage or lighter soils; water; some say better fruit in cooler summer areas; some need higher chill hours; choose several varieties for longer ripening season; a few are evergreen
Chokecherry	8-10			N	wonderful jam; various native (wild) varieties available
Currant	5-7		x		part shade needed in warmer summer areas; more frequent water for shallow roots; good drainage; will tolerate clay or sand; most tart; some white and pink ones will sweeten; black currants x-pollination = better yield; all easy to propagate from stem cuttings
Gooseberry	5-7		x		thorny to few thorns; part shade ok; lot of chill required; gets currant worms; some crosses done with currants to produce jostaberry and others; grow from stem cuttings
Juneberry	5-6		x	N	wild and named varieties; wild take longer to fruit; beautiful fragrant flowers; fruit a few weeks after bloom; drought ok
Eugenia					takes water and warmth
Cherry of Rio Grande	5-6			N	hard to transplant (few root hairs); grows slowly to 15'; fruit 3 weeks after beautiful flowers; frosts at 20 F.
Surinam cherry or Pitanga	5-9			N	beautiful flowers; freezes at 22-27 F; fruits 3 weeks after flowering; can fruit several times with extra water and fertilizer; good complex flavor -- some kinds tart/sweet.
Goumi	5-6			N	dry & wind ok; mild flavor -- slightly sweet with soft pit; can graft; can grow by stem layering, from seed & cuttings.
Guava, Lemon & Strawberry	11-12			N	warmth; freezes at 22-25 F but grows back fast; fruit in 2 years; if ripens by October has tasty fruit, after that is tart, Strawberry and Lemon have richer flavor than tropical one
Goji Berry or Chinese Wolfberry	6-10				likes full sun (ok in part shade) and can take heat; grows naturally in alkaline soil in sand or clay; takes 3 years to bear; keep more moist when small; several harvests over a long time, health use; propagate from seed and cuttings

Bush berries (continued)

Fruit	Pick	X-Pol	Var	Prune	Other
Honeyberries Haskap (Blue Honeysuckle)	6	x	x	x	Fruits first year; fruits 2 weeks before strawberries so earliest of fruit; use later blooming varieties for Bay Area; produces on 1 st year wood so prune heavily; loose soil best but will grow in clay; roots close to surface.
Mahonia, Barberry, Oregon Grape	7-9			N	prickly leaves; take most any soil; drought resistant; several varieties--deep blue berries are very astringent--make great jelly & will grow in part shade; the red ones from CA desert regions can be eaten off bush but need more soil drainage. Complex flavor.
Seaberry or Sea buckthorn	8-9	m & f		N	can take dry, hot and windy conditions; thorny; highly nutritious; typically occur in dry, sandy areas; roots used to hold hills; astringent so processed for juice, medicine.
Ugni	8-10	more Fruit		N	Chilean Guava; needs more water; part shade in hot areas. Delicious flavor like spicy apple, can propagate by stem layering.
Vaccinium ovatum	8-9			N	Evergreen Huckleberry; from cuttings, seed, or by layering; best in moist conditions in full to part shade; need more acidic soil; hard to transplant; stronger more complex flavor than most blueberries



Berry size fruit on trees and vines

Fruit	Pick	X-Pol	Var	Prune	Other
Autumn Olive	8-1		x	N	varies from slightly sweet to tart in flavor; takes dry and windy conditions; propagate by seed, cuttings, grafting.
Grape	8-10		x	x	Many varieties, many need heat to sweeten; propagates easily from stem cuttings.
Mulberry	6-9		x		most fruit cause stains; birds love; any soil; some drought ok; heat ok; black mulberry is small tree with mild to strong flavor similar to blackberry
Elderberry	fall	x-pol	x		needs water; native varieties not need x-pollination
Kiwi, Hardy	9-10	m & f	x	x	needs water; sweeter than regular kiwi; wind damages

For a similar list of many fruit see http://www.crfg.org/chapters/golden_gate/images/Bay_Area.pdf

Other berries (with varying degrees of flavor and sweetness): Aronia, Black raspberry, Cranberry, Dogwood, some Fuchsia, Gaulnettya, Hawthorn, High Bush Cranberry, Lingonberry, Luma Apiculata, Mammillaria Cactus, Magnolia Vine, Mountain Ash, Nagoon Berry, Nanking Cherry, Osoberry, Raisin Tree, Salal, Salmonberry, Shepherdia, Silverberry, Thimbleberry, Wintergreen

Nurseries with good descriptions of plants: from West: Bay Laurel, Burnt Ridge, Lon Rombaugh, One Green World, Raintree, Trees of Antiquity; From elsewhere: Edible Landscaping, Hartman, Hidden Springs, Nourse Farms, Oikos Tree Crops (lots of wild fruits), Stark Brothers
(Other specialty nurseries for blueberries, raspberries, etc. not on the West coast are more concerned with cold or heat tolerance in their growing condition descriptions.) Idell Weydemeyer CRFG Golden Gate 2012