

Blueberries: Antioxidants and Much More

Blueberries are often thought of as the "underdog berry". It's tough going up against the gorgeous appearance of a strawberry, or competing with the elegance of the raspberry. Even the blackberry conjures up the smell of a delicious warm pie fresh out of the oven. The blueberry is more rugged, more practical in its nature, but don't underestimate this delicious food. Once it lands in your mouth, it's definitely no longer the underdog!

This summer season is a wonderful time to get your customers excited about this delicious berry. Give it prime real estate in your berry display, and of course, be sure to provide your customers with the information they need to make the best selection. Here are a few blueberry tips to help with this process:

How to Select Blueberries

Blueberries should be firm and have a uniform hue color with a whitish, dusty bloom. The white bloom is the blueberry's natural protection against the sun and is a sign of freshness. Avoid berries that appear dull in color - they should be a dark blue. If you very gently and lightly were to shake the container, the berries should move around pretty freely and easily. If they don't, then they are likely old, or possibly even moldy.

How to Store Blueberries

Blueberries should be kept refrigerated in a covered container for best storage. Although it is good to wash the berries, this should only occur just before eating. Never wash berries and then store them in a container for later eating, as they will mold quickly. Washing removes the bloom on the skin that protects the berry and keeps its skin from degrading. Blueberries can also be frozen, however, keep in mind that this will slightly alter the texture of the fruit as well as the flavor.

Nutritional Value

This is where blueberries truly shine. They are loaded with nutrients and flavor and are very low in calories. Blueberries are well known for being one of the best (if not the best) fruits for antioxidant capabilities, meaning their ability to destroy free radicals, which is so beneficial to our well-being. In a study at Tufts University, over 60 fruits and vegetables were analyzed for their antioxidant capabilities and blueberries came out as the leader. Not only is this fruit incredibly flavorful, but its value in promoting good health is significant as well.