

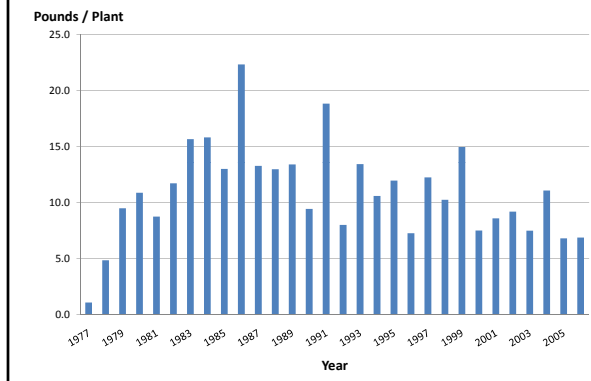
30 Years of Growing Blueberries in Missouri

Dr. Ben Fuqua
Department of Agriculture
Missouri State University

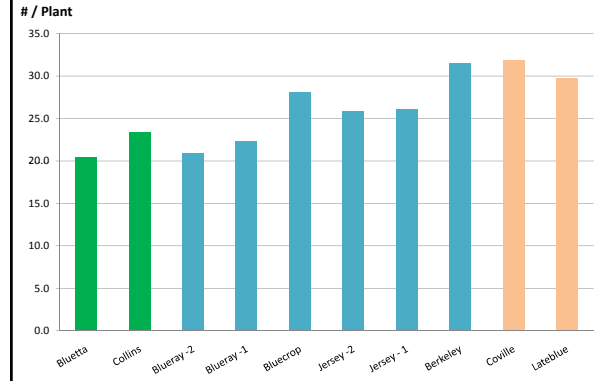
1975 Blueberry Planting Springfield

- Early-Season – Bluetta, Collins (early June)
- Mid-Season – Bluecrop, Blueray, Jersey, Berkeley (mid/late June)
- Late-Season – Coville, Lateblue (early/mid July)

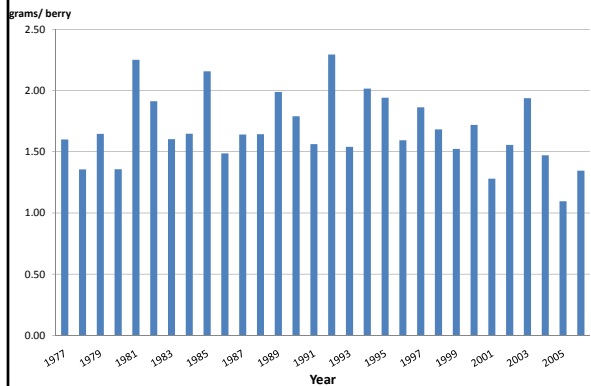
30 – Year (Composite) Plant Yields



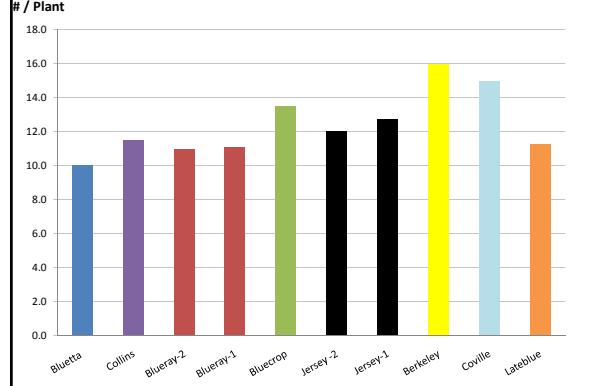
1986 Yields

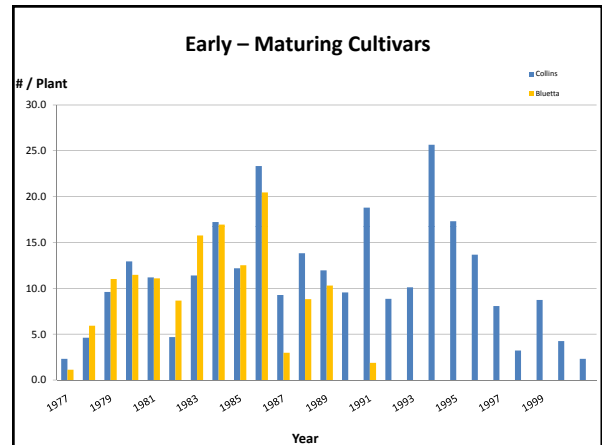
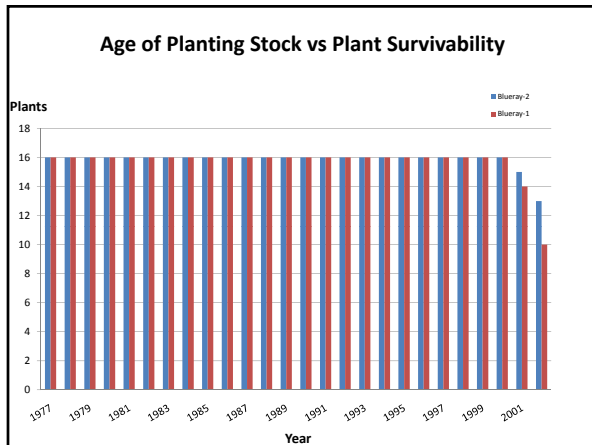
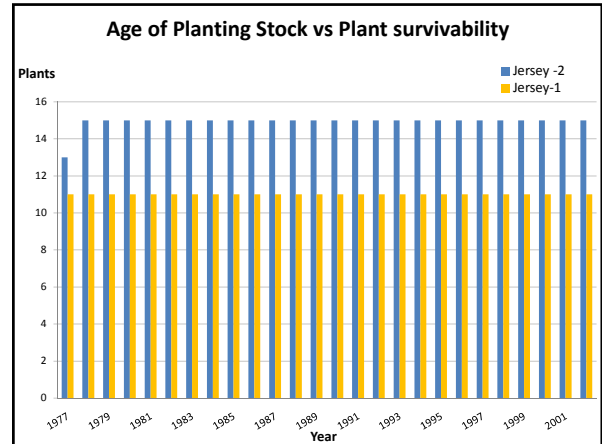
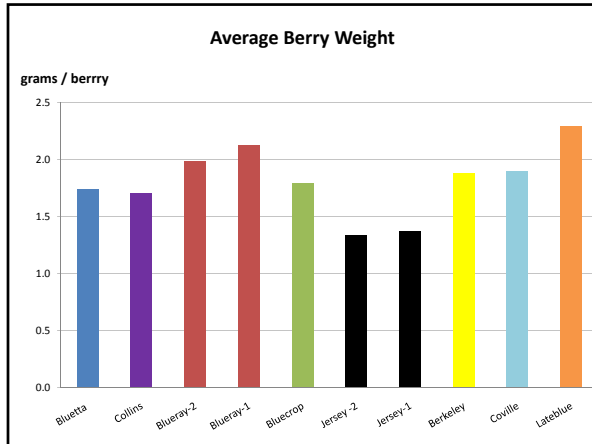


30 – Year (Composite) Berry weights



Average Plant Yields





1998 Blueberry Planting Mountain Grove

- High Producers
 - Bluecrop, Brigitta Blue, Chandler, Darrow, Legacy, Nelson, Reka
- Large Berries
 - Chandler, Brigitta Blue, Nui

(information supplied by Dr. Martin Kaps)



Observations

• Plants

- Select cultivars (maturity groups) to correspond with marketing strategies or home use needs
- Buy healthy, disease-free plants from reputable nurseries
- Age of planting stock important for first-year survival (2-3 year-old rooted plants survive better than rooted cuttings)

Observations

• Soils:

- Drainage – Well-drained soils are a must (planting on raised beds (berms) improves drainage)
- pH – target pH in the plant row should be 4.7-5.2 (Most Missouri soils need acidifying for growing blueberries)

soil pH is easily changed but difficult to stabilize (pH can be kept in optimum range fairly well by nitrogen fertilizer selections and/or acidifying irrigation water)

Observations

• Plant nutrition

- Blueberries are heavy feeders of nitrogen and iron
- Most fertilizers are applied as solids or liquids
- Some fertilizers can be applied as foliar sprays
- Annual leaf analysis recommended to “fine” tune fertilizer applications

Observations

• Water

- irrigation essential for growing blueberries in Missouri
- drip irrigation systems recommended in blueberry plantings
- mulches help conserve water and improves the water:air ratio around plant roots
- mulches helps control weeds

Observations

• Pests

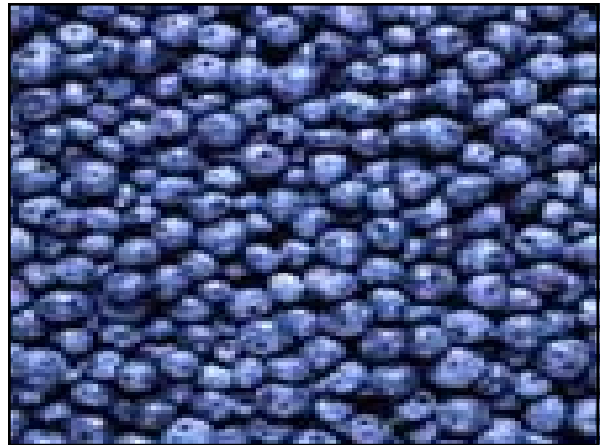
- Root rot - *Phytophthora cinnamomi*
- Stem blight – *Botryosphaeria dothidea*
- Insects – Japanese beetle
- Birds
- Voles

30 – Years of “Learning”

1. Highbush blueberries CAN be grown in Missouri (150 – 175 acres currently in production)
2. The demand for Missouri-grown blueberries is greater than the supply
3. Increased emphases on “healthy” foods will increase demand for blueberries

30 – Years of “Learning”

3. Consumers enjoy “picking” blueberries
(customers often travel 25 miles or more for the opportunity to pick and buy fresh blueberries)
4. The Blueberry Council of Missouri has done a tremendous job of educating the consumers on the multiple uses of fresh and frozen blueberries
5. Missouri blueberry growers are some of the most innovative and creative folks I’ve ever met







4. Missouri blueberry growers are some of the most creative and interesting folks I've ever met