

Northcountry Blueberry

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Northcountry (MN 350) is a new half-high blueberry cultivar developed by the University of Minnesota fruit breeding program. This cultivar is a sibling of Northsky, introduced in 1983. Northcountry is similar to Northsky in many fruit characteristics, but plants are larger and more productive. Due to this higher productivity, Northcountry is recommended along with Northblue for commercial plantings as well as in home gardens in northern regions of the U.S. and Canada.

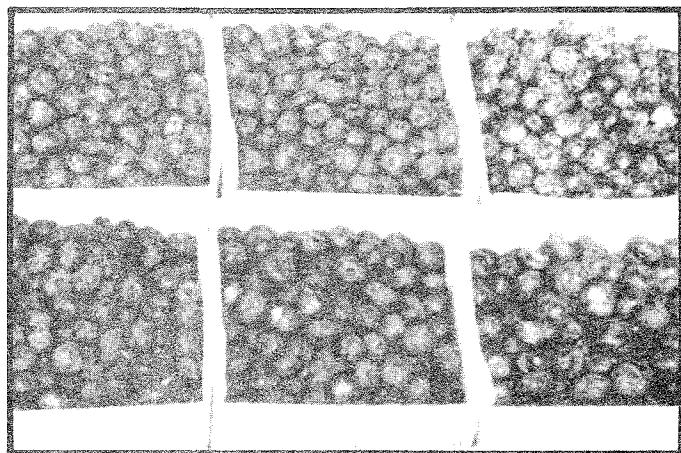
Northcountry was selected in 1973 from the cross B6xR2P4 made in 1968. B6 was selected at Excelsior, Minnesota from a progeny of G65xAshworth (*Vaccinium corymbosum*). R2P4 was selected at Grand Rapids, Minnesota for its low stature and winter injury resistance from a population of open-pollinated seedlings derived from fruit of half-high blueberry plants collected in the Harvard Forest, Massachusetts.

The fruit of Northcountry is medium sized ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter) and enveloped with a waxy bloom of attractive sky-blue color. The flavor of the fresh fruit is sweet and mild, typical of the lowbush blueberry (*V. angustifolium*). Quality of the processed fruit is equal or superior to Northblue, Northsky, and popular highbush cultivars.

Mature plants of Northcountry are 18 to 24 inches high and 30 to 40 inches in diameter. Plants can tolerate midwinter temperatures down to -35 F with little injury. Productivity of Northcountry normally ranges from 2 to 5 lb. of fruit per plant. Under optimum conditions 8 year old plants can produce up to 7 lb of fruit. The ripening period begins approximately 5 days earlier than Northblue and extends for 2 to 3 weeks.



Blossoms



Mature plants can produce up to 7 lbs. of fruit

Like other blueberry cultivars, Northcountry is most productive when grown in full sun on a well drained site with a light textured, acid soil (soil pH between 4.2 and 5.5 is optimum). Northcountry is self-compatible and therefore can be planted without another pollenizer cultivar. Pollination by domestic or wild bees is essential. Protection from rabbits, deer and birds is necessary where these animals are a problem. Pruning is usually unnecessary on young plants except for removing injured or broken wood. Remove unproductive larger stems when plants are 5 to 7 years old.

Northcountry is propagated by cooperating nurseries under a royalty agreement with the Minnesota Nurseryman's Research Corporation.

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