



***Vaccinium angustifolium* Aiton**
Blueberry, Low Sweet Blueberry

Ericaceae (Heath Family)

Blooming season: May - June.

Plant:

Low, upright shrub, 20 - 60 cm high, clone forming.
Very slender twigs, “grooved above the buds, or angular” (Barnes and Wagner 1913, 1981 p. 324).
Most abundant blueberry of upper midwest (Rosendahl 1950).



Leaves:

Alternate, bright green, “narrowly elliptic, 2-3 times as long as broad” (Voss 1996 p. 45).
Finely serrulate, teeth bristle tipped.

Flower:

White or pink tinged, urn shaped, 6-7 mm long, petals reflexed.
10 stamens.
Calyx green, but with red edge.
Small racemes - usually 5 or fewer flowers - appear with leaves.

Fruit:

Blue berry, 0.9-1.5 cm across.
Ripening July - August.
Edible, sweet, many fine seeds.

Can be confused with:

Other blueberries: *V. pallidum* Aiton, Hillside or Dryland Blueberry with entire or only partly serrulate leaves; and *V. myrtilloides* Michaux with entire, more or less “densely pubescent leaves” (Voss 1996, p. 49).
Huckleberry, *Gaylussacia baccata*, has yellow to orange resinous dots on the leaves, particularly on the undersurface. The berry always has 10 “nutlets” containing its seeds.



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Geographic range:

Type specimen location:

State: Throughout, but less frequent in southeast portion of state.

Regional: Newfoundland to Minnesota, south to Delaware, western Virginia, Ohio, northeast Iowa.

Habitat:

Local: Upland.

Regional: Dry, acid, sandy soil, tolerates light shade. Also found on edges of bogs.

Common local companions:

Bracken fern, huckleberry, sassafras and oaks.

Usages:

Human: The blueberries are very tasty, and widely used for baking and preserves, and as a fresh fruit. Native Americans dried the berries for later use. They are a good source of dietary anti-oxidants.

Animal: Ruffed grouse and bears like the berries, and deer and cottontails browse the twigs.

Why is it called *that*?

Rosendahl (1955) reports *Vaccinium* is classical Latin for a blueberry; *angusti* means “narrow” and *folium* leaf, descriptive of this species leaf. The name blueberry is so very descriptive!

Prepared by: Barbara Lukacs Grob December 2007