



## *Rare Berries*

### Huckleberry

*Treasure of the Wild*



Huckleberries (two species -- *Vaccinium membranaceum* and *Vaccinium ovatum*)  
a close relative of the blueberry

## *Review of Rare Berries*

*click to browse!*

- [Saskatoon](#)
- [Norton grape](#)
  - [Yumberry](#)
- [Cape Gooseberry](#)
- [Other Gooseberries](#)
  - [Aronia](#)
  - [Blackcurrant](#)
  - [Elderberry](#)
  - [Seaberry](#)
  - [Macqui](#)

## *Huckleberries in Recent News*

Shortly after moving into the White House, President Obama and his family were treated to a [huckleberry pie made by the White House chefs](#) *(click!)*

Let's have a look at what huckleberries are all about!



Bog huckleberries, Nova Scotia

## *Huckleberry Facts*

- huckleberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum* and *Vaccinium ovatum*) is a name used in North America for several wild berry plants in *Vaccinium* (same genus as blueberries, cranberries and lingonberries)
- huckleberry is the state fruit of Idaho
- blueberries have numerous tiny seeds, while huckleberries have 10 larger seeds
- the berries are small and round, usually less than 5 mm in diameter
- huckleberries range in color according to species and maturation from bright red through dark purple and blue
- huckleberries range in taste from tart to sweet, with a flavor similar to that of a blueberry
- huckleberries are a favorite of bears
- in the Pacific Northwest of North America, huckleberries are found in mid-alpine regions, often on the lower slopes of mountains
- huckleberry grows best in damp, acidic soil. Under optimal conditions, huckleberries can be as much as 1.5-2 m (about 5-6.5 feet) high
- usually ripen in mid-to-late summer; later at higher elevations
- was the nickname of a fictional character -- [Huckleberry Finn](#) -- in the books on [Tom Sawyer](#) by US humorist, [Mark Twain](#) (1835-1910)

# Research on Huckleberries

- Lee J, Finn CE, Wrolstad RE. Department of Food Science, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331

## Comparison of anthocyanin pigment and other phenolic compounds in two species of huckleberries. J Agric Food Chem. 2004 Nov 17;52(23):7039-44.

- *Vaccinium ovatum* had greater total anthocyanins, total phenolics, oxygen radical absorbing capacity (ORAC), and ferric reducing antioxidant potential (FRAP) than did *V. membranaceum*
- each species contained 15 anthocyanins (galactoside, glucoside, and arabinoside of delphinidin, cyanidin, petunidin, peonidin, and malvidin) but in different proportions
- polyphenolics of both species were mainly composed of cinnamic acid derivatives and flavonol glycosides
- the major polyphenolic compound in *V. membranaceum* was neochlorogenic acid, and in *V. ovatum*, chlorogenic acid.

-----

- Yang S, Bishop JG, Webster MS. School of Biological Sciences, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164

## Colonization genetics of an animal-dispersed plant (*Vaccinium membranaceum*) at Mt St Helens, Washington. Mol Ecol. 2008 Feb;17(3):731-40.

- recently founded population of the animal-dispersed *Vaccinium membranaceum* (black huckleberry) on new volcanic deposits at Mount St Helens (Washington, USA) 24 years post-eruption
- founders were derived from many sources, about half originated from a small number of plants that survived the 1980 eruption in pockets of remnant soil
- dispersal abilities include colonizing new habitats without significant reduction in genetic diversity
- take-home message: huckleberries were eaten by animal or bird foragers and their seeds dropped in small pockets of remnant soils on the slopes of Mount St. Helens, recolonizing huckleberry bushes distant from their origins 24 years after the volcanic eruption. Half the huckleberry population actually regerminated from seeds that survived the debris avalanche when the volcano erupted on May 18, 1980.

**ARCHIVES** (click!)

Pass this information on to a friend...

Suggest a visit to the **Berry Doctor Sign-in Page!**

Dr. Paul  
The Berry Doctor

contact *The Berry Doctor*

Want to reprint an article? I have a wide variety of articles on berry nutrition and food antioxidants you can consider for your website or newsletter. I'm sure there's a perfect fit for you! **Please email me** and I'll be happy to give you some choices and the attribution line.

Privacy policy: I do not rent, sell, trade or share your email address with anyone, ever.

To change your email address: send a note with the new address to **The Berry Doctor!**

To unsubscribe: Click once on the "unsubscribe" link at the end of the email page you receive.

The fine print: This newsletter is Copyright© 2006-9 by The Berry Doctor

---