Blueberry Soil pH Target and Testing Checklist

> **Companion Reference Sheet for:** Blueberry Soil pH: The Range That Keeps Roots Feeding
> Save this PDF to your phone or print a copy for field reference. Planting dates vary by site and season. Check your local extension office for your area.

Key Takeaways

- Blueberries need acidic soil, and a target near pH 4.5 to 5.2 suits many highbush plantings.
- Test soil before adding elemental sulfur or another amendment. A pH reading alone does not determine the right treatment.
- Elemental sulfur is the usual long-term soil amendment for lowering pH. Changes take months, so retest before applying more.
- High pH can reduce iron and other nutrient availability. Yellow leaves can have causes beyond soil pH, so confirm the problem.
- Regular irrigation can affect soil pH. Test water alkalinity as well as its pH if you use the same water source often.
- If native soil is strongly alkaline or difficult to adjust, grow blueberries in a raised bed or container with an acidic growing mix.

Why blueberries need acidic soil

Soil pH	What it means for blueberries	What to do
Below 4.5	Below the main target range used by many extension recommendations.	Do not add more acidifying material. Test again and follow local extension or laboratory guidance before trying to raise pH.
4.5 to 5.0	Within Penn State Extension's stated optimum range for blueberry growth.	Maintain the soil and avoid unnecessary pH amendments.
5.0 to 5.2	Penn State Extension notes that the optimum can extend to 5.2 in clay soil.	Use the soil report and soil texture to decide whether any adjustment is needed.
5.2 to 5.5	Oregon State University Extension Service lists blueberry and cranberry at 4.5 to 5.5. Oregon State University Extension Service	Check your local recommendation and test report before adding an acidifier.
Above 5.5	Above the ranges listed by the extension sources cited here.	Get a soil-specific amendment recommendation, especially if the site is alkaline or strongly buffered.

Test the soil before choosing an amendment

Step	What to do	Why it matters
Test first	Collect a representative sample and request pH and amendment guidance.	A reading alone does not account for soil texture or buffering capacity.
Choose the right response	Use elemental sulfur to lower pH only when the test report recommends it.	Different soils need different amendment amounts.
Apply carefully	Follow the report and local extension instructions, especially around established roots.	Overapplication can make the soil too acidic or injure roots.
Wait and retest	Allow months for sulfur to work, then test the soil again before making another change.	Retesting helps you measure the result and avoid correcting too far.

Field Checklist for blueberry soil pH

- ☐ Collect a representative soil sample before planting or amending.
- ☐ Record the soil pH and read the report’s crop-specific recommendations.
- ☐ Consider texture, drainage, and soil buffering capacity before choosing an amendment.
- ☐ Use elemental sulfur only when the soil test calls for a pH decrease.
- ☐ Do not use lime around blueberry plants or pour vinegar onto soil or roots.
- ☐ Check irrigation-water alkalinity if you use the same water source often.
- ☐ Wait months after applying sulfur, then retest before making another change.
- ☐ Use an acidic potting mix for container blueberries, not garden soil or a lime-based mix.

Published by The Garden Den ({ thegardenden.com }), a publication of Viking Trading Group LLC. Source URL: https://thegardenden.com/blueberry-soil-ph-the-range-that-keeps-roots-feeding/