

You be the judge!

Blueberry variety rating activity

Vvi - Vegetable varieties investigation

Standards (NYS): Science: 1, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, ELA: 1, 2, Social Studies: 5.3



Purpose

- To provide youth with an opportunity to rate varieties based on taste, yield, ease/reliability, and overall satisfaction.
- To illustrate the importance of knowing variety name
- Familiarizes students with the process gardeners use to rate varieties.

Overview

Youth will be asked to pretend they are gardeners and have grown the varieties of blueberries provided. They will taste, assess yield, and read ease/reliability statements. Then they must rate each variety of blueberry *Rate this Variety* form.

Materials needed

- 3-4 varieties of fresh blueberries
- Container for each variety
- One *Rate this Variety* form: for every participant and variety
- Pencils
- Activity instructions and ease/reliability descriptions (below)

Instructions

1. Display blueberry varieties in baskets respectively labeled with variety names.
2. Assign different amounts of each variety to their containers, i.e. one basket is overflowing, one is 3/4 full, one is half full, and one is 1/4 full.
3. Cut out the ease/reliability descriptions and assign each to a variety of blueberry. Make sure the statements correspond with their variety's respective "yield." Youth will use these descriptions to determine a rating for ease/reliability.
4. Set out *Rate this Variety* forms and pencils.
5. Remind participants to wash hands first. **Then ask participants to begin rating:**
 - Taste: Youth can taste one of each variety until all have had a chance to rate.
 - Yield: Each berry basket will have few, some, many, or tons of berries, which corresponds to the amount of berries harvested from the garden altogether for the season.
 - Ease/Reliability: See descriptions below and assign each to one of the blueberry varieties.
 - Overall: Based on all of the above, how would they rate each variety?
 - Review: What else would you say about each variety?
6. Encourage discussion throughout the activity. Ask questions such as:
 - Which variety tasted the best?
 - Why did you give that one a 2, and that one a 4 for yield?
 - If you only had room in your garden for one of these varieties, which would you grow? Why?
 - Why is it important to know variety names?

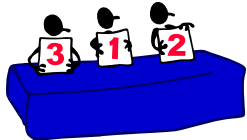
Modify

This activity can easily be modified by using other fruit (such as apples) or vegetables (such as carrots), depending on what is available.

Congratulations! You are a gardener, and you grow blueberries. This season you grew 4 varieties of blueberry.



Directions



Rate each blueberry variety based on taste, yield, ease & reliability, and overall, on a scale from 1 to 5. Use a **Rate this Variety Form** for each variety you rate.



1. Taste

Taste one berry from each basket and rate from one to five (5 = most tasty, 1 = least tasty).



2. Yield

Each berry basket has all the berries harvested from one bush on a single day. Based on the number of berries you see in the basket compared to other varieties, rate this variety on yield (5 = highest yield, 1 = lowest yield).



3. Ease/Reliability

Each blueberry variety has a description with it describing “your experience” growing this variety. Use this description to assign a score of 1-5 for ease and reliability (5 = difficult to grow, 1 = easy to grow).



4. Overall

Based on everything you have seen, read, and tasted, give the variety an overall rating (5 = best, 1 = worst).



5. Review

What else would might you say about this variety?

Ease/reliability descriptions for blueberry varieties:

This blueberry bush got attacked by several kinds of pests and also got infected with a mysterious fungus. Once I began checking on the plant daily and spraying it regularly with natural fungicide, the plant did well.

This blueberry, though I planted it in a less than ideal site in my garden, grew vigorously and produced well. There were no noticeable pests or diseases all season.

We had a very, very dry summer, and I was so busy I rarely watered this blueberry bush. It was clear the heat and drought decrease berry productivity from previous years but rest of the bush stayed pretty healthy and resistant to pests and diseases.

No matter what I did, I had a hard time getting this thing to grow! I started out doing a soil pH test and added the proper amendments. Then I nursed it through the entire season, carefully watering, pruning, and fertilizing but it just doesn't seem to produce much fruit. I have read everything about growing blueberries, but nothing seems to work with this plant!