

# Growing Garden Educators

## *Growing Blueberries in Containers*



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**October 11, 2025**



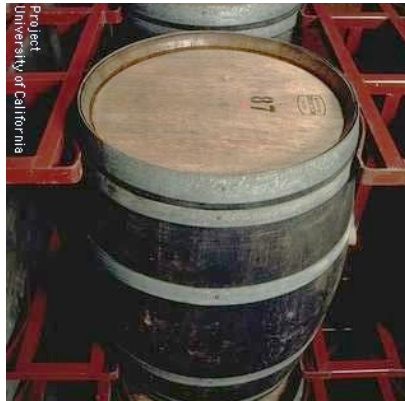
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# Blueberries

- Full sun ☀️
- Acidic soil  
low pH 5.5 (Blood is 7.35)
- Well-drained soil
- Best in containers



- In the past, blueberries needed many “chill hours”; not possible in CA until hybrids developed with lower chill requirements in the last 70 years.

❖ Best varieties for San Diego are **Southern Highbush**


❖ Best hybrids for San Diego County (early ripening) are:

**Jewel, Misty, Sharpblue, Sapphire**



# Misty Blueberry

*(someone from this workshop will take this plant home)*

- **Self-pollinating** ( *although planting with other hybrids may increase yield*)
- **Hardiness zones 5 - 10** (San Diego is 10B)
- **Ripens in June**
- **Full sun** 
- **Well-drained soil**
- **Mulch** (any material, organic or inorganic (like gravel or plastic), that is spread over the soil surface to conserve moisture, suppress weeds, regulate soil temperature, and reduce erosion)
- **Needs acidic soil pH 5.5 (containers best choice)**
- 2- 3 years to bear (healthy plants need to establish ROOTS first; so break off flowers first couple of years)



# Blueberries

## (continued)

### Fertilizer & Amendment Needs

- Add peat moss to container before planting
- Use balanced fertilizer for acid-loving plants
- If your pH is higher, as is common for our generally alkaline soil, experts recommend the periodic application of sulfur. (Many acid loving fertilizers contain sulfur.)
- Apply light dressing of worm castings and compost couple of times per year.

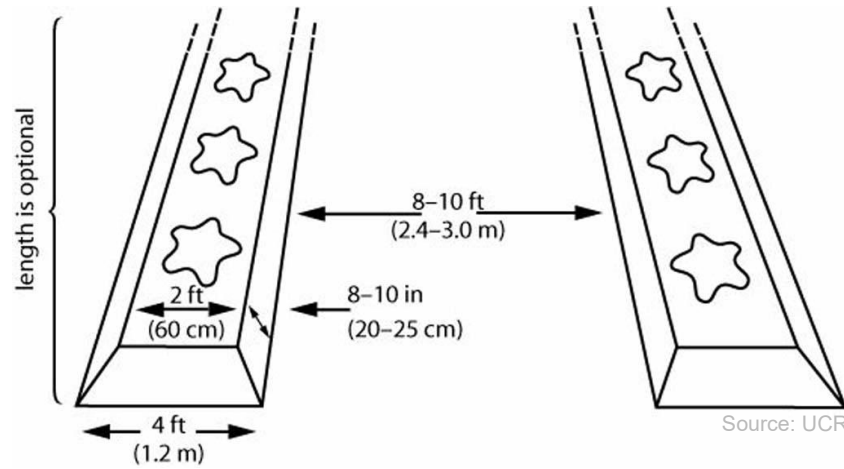


# Strawberries

- Strawberries have better yield and larger fruit with increased pollination from bees, so keeping a **bee-friendly** garden is a good idea.
- **Day neutral** produce an almost continuous crop from May through early fall.
- Best varieties for San Diego- that are harvested spring-summer  
***ALBION-SEASCAPE-PORTOLA-CHANDLER***
- Plant in full sun 🌞
- Raised bed best, at least 12 inches high
- Good organic soil with compost
- Use “hill” system, 12” to 15” apart, aisles 1½ to 2 ft. wide, cut off runners. This will give you one large plant in each spot.



# Planting Strawberries



UC Statewide IPM Program  
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# Blackberries

- Keep a bee-friendly garden
- Raised bed is best
- Plant in full sun
- Use good organic soil with compost
- Thornless best for school gardens
- Prune to 4-6 canes and to limit height
- Trellis, fencing helps control and harvest
- Harvest in summer (August-September)



# Blackberries

What's Wrong with My Blackberries?



...then you get these guys



**Scale!!!**



# University of California Integrated Pest Management (UC IPM)

## Common pests of berries:

- **Aphids:** small, soft-bodied insects with long slender mouthparts that they use to pierce stems, leaves, and other tender plant parts and suck out fluids.



Wingless adults and nymphs of the potato aphid.

Your first step in treating pests!

<https://ipm.ucanr.edu>

**APHIDS**

*Integrated Pest Management for Home Gardeners and Landscape Professionals*

Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects with long slender mouthparts that they use to pierce stems, leaves, and other tender plant parts and suck out fluids. Almost every plant has one or more aphid species that occasionally feed on it. Many aphid species are difficult to distinguish from one another; however, management of most aphid species is similar.

**IDENTIFICATION**

Aphids have soft pear-shaped bodies with long legs and antennae and may be green, yellow, brown, red, or black depending on the species and the plants they feed on. A few species appear waxy or woolly due to the secretion of a waxy white or gray substance over their body surface. Most species have a pair of tubelike structures called cornicles projecting backward out of the hind end of



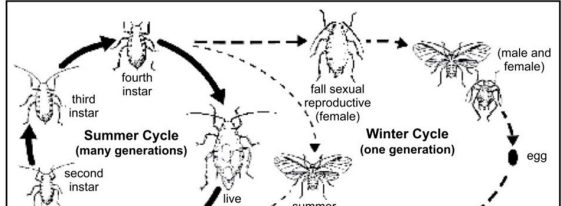


Figure 1. Wingless adults and nymphs of the potato aphid.

Figure 2. Woolly apple aphid adults showing waxy coating.



Summer Cycle (many generations): first instar, second instar, third instar, fourth instar, live, summer.

Winter Cycle (one generation): fall sexual reproductive (female), male and female, egg.

Pest Note pdf and photo from UCIPM



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# UC IPM: Common Pests of Berries Continued

- **Whitefly:** tiny, sap-sucking insects that may become abundant in vegetable and ornamental plantings, especially during warm weather.



Adult greenhouse whiteflies on undersides of leaves.

## WHITEFLIES

*Integrated Pest Management for Homes, Gardens, and Landscapes*

Whiteflies are tiny, sap-sucking insects that may become abundant in vegetable and ornamental plantings, especially during warm weather. They excrete sticky honeydew and cause yellowing or death of leaves. Outbreaks often occur when the natural biological control is disrupted. Management is difficult once populations are high.

### IDENTIFICATION AND LIFE CYCLE

Despite their name, whiteflies are not true flies (in the insect order Diptera) but are in the order Hemiptera, related to aphids, scales and mealybugs. They derive their name from the mealy white wax covering the adult's wings and body. Adults are tiny insects with yellowish bodies and four whitish wings. Although adults of some species have distinctive wing markings, many species are most readily distinguished in the last nymphal (immature) stage.



Figure 1. Adult greenhouse whiteflies on undersides of leaves.



Pest Note pdf from UCIPM



# UC IPM: Common Pests of Berries (continued)

- **Scale:** Scales are sucking insects that insert their tiny, straw-like mouthparts into bark, fruit, or leaves, mostly on trees and shrubs and other perennial plants. Use horticultural oil.



Photo: UCIPM

Black scales.



Photo: UCIPM

Greedy scale.



Photo: UCIPM

## SCALES

*Integrated Pest Management for Home Gardeners and Landscape Professionals*

Scales are sucking insects that insert their tiny, strawlike mouthparts into bark, fruit, or leaves, mostly on trees and shrubs and other perennial plants. Some scales can seriously damage their host, while other species do no apparent damage to plants even when scales are very abundant. The presence of scales can be easily overlooked, in part because they do not resemble most other insects.

**IDENTIFICATION**

Adult female scales and immatures (nymphs) of most species are circular to oval, wingless, and lack a separate head or other easily recognizable body parts (Figure 1). Some scales change greatly in appearance as they grow, and some species have males and females that differ in shape, size, and color. Adult males are rarely seen and are tiny, delicate, white to yellow insects with one pair of wings and a pair of long antennae. Some scale species lack males and the females reproduce without mating.

Armored scales and soft scales are the most common types (or families).

soft scale) and often the particular species of scale to determine whether control is warranted; and if so, what methods and timing of control action are effective. For example, sago palms can be infested by the similar-looking cycad scale and oleander scale. Even very high populations of oleander scale are harmless to most plants, but cycad scale warrants control because it causes serious damage and can kill sago palms. Insecticides differ in their effectiveness for certain scale types. imidacloprid, a popular systemic insecticide (discussed below), controls soft scales and certain other scales but does not control armored scales or cottony cushion scale.

**Armored Scales**

Armored scales, family Diaspididae, have a flattened, platelike cover that is less than 1/8 inch in diameter (Figure 2). The covers often have a differently colored, slight protuberance (exuviae or "nipple") and concentric rings may form as nymphs (immatures) grow and their cover enlarges. The actual insect body is underneath the cover; if you remove the cover, the insect body will

Figure 1. Black scales with a raised H shape on their back.

Figure 2. Greedy scale, a relatively harmless armored scale.

Pest Note pdf from UCIPM

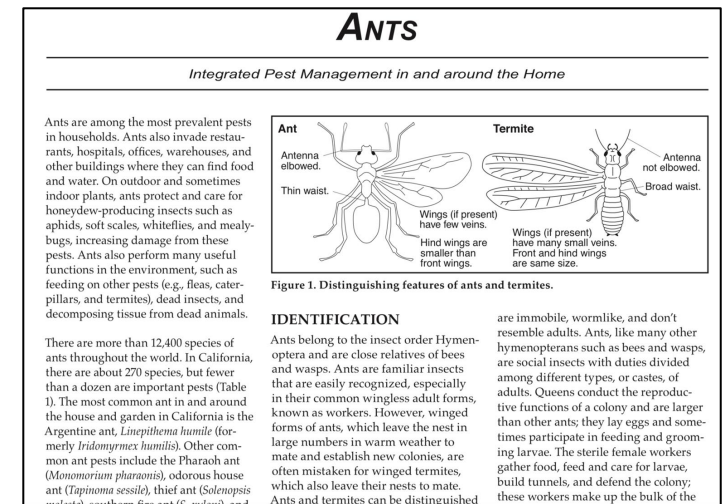


# UC IPM: Common Pests of Berries (continued)

- **Ants:** they "farm" pest insects like aphids and scale insects, protecting them from predators in exchange for their sweet honeydew. Use ant bait appropriate for your ant species based on the UC IPM recommendations.



**FOR ALL THESE PESTS:**



- Use hose attachment using the "flat" or "fan" setting, which puts out a relatively high-velocity, low-volume spray of water. Usually just a few brief sweeps knocks them off the plants.



# Homemade Borax-Based Ant Bait

Effective borate and sucrose (kitchen sugar) baits are comprised of 1/2 to 1% boric acid and 10 to 25% sucrose in water.

**Dissolve 1/2 teaspoon of powdered boric acid and 9 teaspoons of granulated sugar in 1 cup hot water to create a solution of approximately 1% boric acid and 19% sucrose.**

Refillable bait stations are the safest to use.

**Don't forget to label as ant bait!**

**Do not eat!**



# Best Resources for Berries in San Diego

## My Favorites

- **Strawberries:**  
City Farmers on Euclid 🍓 (bare root in Jan.), Grangetto's, Walter Andersen Nursery
- **Blackberries:** thornless best  
Grangetto's, Four Wind Growers (mail order)
- **Blueberries:**  
Stark's (mail order), Walter Andersen Nursery



# Resources

<https://www.mastergardenersd.org/delicious-and-nutritious-blueberries/>

IPM pdf. on ants

[https://ipm.ucanr.edu/legacy\\_assets/PDF/PESTNOTES/pnants.pdf](https://ipm.ucanr.edu/legacy_assets/PDF/PESTNOTES/pnants.pdf)

IPM pdf on aphids

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# Let's plant a Misty Blueberry for a lucky participant to take home!!!



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