



Fruit Share



2010 · Blueberries

What It Takes

Meet Liz Condo. She and her family – husband Lou and sons Louie Jr. (6) & Dillan (2) – grew the blueberries you’re enjoying on their organic family farm in Hammonton, New Jersey. Thirteen years ago Lou called Liz while she was at work. Next thing you know, he was proposing they lease a blueberry farm in the Pine Barren fields of their hometown – Hammonton. Although Lou’s family has a rich farming tradition, neither of the Condos quite knew what they were getting into.

Thirteen years, 2 kids and 60 acres later, the Condo’s farm is thriving. These days – at harvest time – Lou and a team of twenty workers hit the fields at 4:30 a.m. and start picking berries. Come noon, the whole family starts packing and the rest of the day is a dizzy whirl of tending to the kids, trucks coming and going and yes, blueberries. Lots of blueberries.

For Liz, farming organically is of the utmost importance. “We raise our kids here, and they’re not inhaling any chemicals,” says Liz. “Farming organically is better for us, for our children, for the environment, and for everyone who buys our organic berries.” And considering the USDA and Tufts University, researchers found blueberries rank #1 in antioxidants compared to 40 other fruits and vegetables, reduce “bad” cholesterol, and provide a general boost to the immune system. Clearly, these berries’ benefits don’t stop at the farm.

On top of being a blueberry farmer, physical therapist, and wife, Liz is – at the end of the day – a mom. The Condos farm is not a massive industrial apparatus; they don’t have legions of workers and they don’t take the easy way out when it comes to working the land - farming organic is tough work. What they do have, though, are the best interests of their kids, employees, and customers at heart. That and some of the juiciest blueberries you’ve ever tasted.



Fun Tips

Too many berries? No problem. These berries freeze great; simply put them in a freezer bag (putting them in dry will prevent sticking together) and toss 'em the freezer. Once frozen, the blueberries make a delicious cold snack. Snack cautiously, though, hands and mouths are liable to turn blue because it's hard to stop at just one. Eaten frozen out of the bag, stored long-term, or used in a smoothie; blueberries are equal parts convenient, healthy, and delectable.



Benefits

Blueberries are considered one of the healthiest fruits a person can eat. Not convinced? Research studies from the USDA, Tufts University, and the University of Maine found the following benefits to eating blueberries:

- High antioxidant activity. Antioxidants help deter cancer and other age-related diseases.
- Prevention of blood vessel damage to those with type 2 diabetes.
- Increase memory retention.
- Anti-aging properties.
- Prevent high blood pressure.
- Reduce of "bad" cholesterol.
- Kill bacteria that can cause food-borne illness.
- Improve eyesight.
- Boost the immune system.

Blueberry Crisp

3 pints fresh blueberries
3 tbsp unbleached all-purpose flour
2/3 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 recipe crisp topping

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
2. Toss the blueberries, flour, sugar and cinnamon together in a bowl. Dump this mixture into an 8" x 10" glass or metal baking pan and spread it out evenly. Then sprinkle the crisp topping over the fruit, covering the entire surface.
3. Place the pan on the center rack in the oven and bake for about 30 to 35 minutes, or until the topping browns and you see the fruit juices bubbling up through the topping.

Crisp Topping

1/2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
2 ounces (1/2 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
1/2 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped

1. Dump the flour and the brown sugar into the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade, and pulse until they're just blended together. Add the butter all at once, and use the pulse button to cut the butter into the flour. Stop pulsing when the mixture is the texture of moist crumbs.



Uses

Although they're great as a snack on their own, these blueberries are as versatile as they are wholesome. Try them...



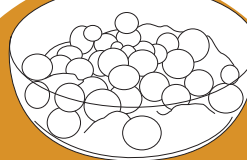
Baking

Mix them in with recipes for muffins, scones, pies, and crisps.



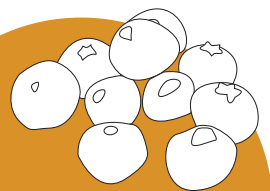
In Smoothies

Blend them with other fruits, ice, and frozen yogurt.



As Toppings

Sprinkle them on cereals and yogurts.



When Frozen

It'll preserve leftover berries and makes a delicious cold snack.