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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Pike Nurseries offers berry sweet tips for National Blueberry Month**

*Local garden center celebrates the super fruit bursting with health benefits*

**ATLANTA (July 13, 2017) –** The experts at **Pike Nurseries** are celebrating **National Blueberry Month** this July with sweet tips on growing a successful crop of this delicious super fruit. The garden center is also sharing delicious ways to incorporate blueberries into tasty treats for the perfect summer snack. From planting the shrubs to getting the nutrients bodies need, gardeners will delight in learning the tips and tricks behind this fruit!

**Planting the Super Fruit**

While most people think of the blueberry as a summer fruit, the low-maintenance shrubs actually provide year-round interest in the garden and can last decades with the proper care. Blueberry bushes present dainty white flowers in spring, fruit in the summer, pretty red and yellow foliage in the fall and reddish brown twigs in the winter for a year-round show. The experts at Pike Nurseries recommend planting blueberry bushes in a sunny location (at least six hours of exposure a day) with acidic soil, which can be achieved by amending native soil with Pike Azalea, Camellia and Gardenia Planting Mix in a 50/50 ratio. Add an organic starter fertilizer, like E.B. Stone Sure Start, to prevent transplant shock and jumpstart healthy root growth. Water thoroughly at the time of planting to ensure the shrubs stay healthy, hydrated and produce the juiciest berries. Blueberry growers are encouraged to set a consistent watering schedule to keep soil evenly moist throughout the growing season. Planting a variety of blueberry types helps create cross-pollination and can extend the harvest time, which in turn produces a more abundant crop!

**Nutritious and Delicious**

Along with their status as a low-maintenance shrub, blueberries are bursting with nutrients to help keep bodies balanced. Researchers at the USDA Human Nutrition Center have reported that blueberries hold the top ranked spot for antioxidants in comparison to other fresh fruits and vegetables. By growing these berries, gardeners can reap some of the convenient, affordable and fresh benefits!

* **Eye-opening antioxidants -** Loaded with carotenoids and flavanoids, blueberries are champions for keeping vision sharp. Studies have shown that eating three or more servings per day may even lower the risk of age-related macular degeneration!
* **Vitamin HQ -** Consuming just one serving of blueberries per day delivers almost 25 percent of the body’s requirement of vitamin C. With just 80 calories and virtually no fat, they make the perfect healthy summer snack! Additionally, vitamin C aids in collagen formation for healthy skin, healthy gums and a strong immune system. Blueberries are also high in manganese, which helps the body manage cholesterol and control nutrients such as carbohydrates and proteins.
* **Cancer fighters** – Blueberries are also champion cancer-fighters, with compounds of pterostilbene and ellagic acid that help ward off and fight cancer. Additionally, their high fiber content is a perfect dietary supplement to assist against heart disease and strengthen cardiac muscles.

These powerful berries can be enjoyed as a low-calorie treat with a morning smoothie or to top off a summer salad with some extra flavor. To get even more creative in the kitchen, add the immune-boosting berries to salsa or homemade popsicles! For recipe ideas, visit Pike Nurseries’ blueberry board on Pinterest at [pinterest.com/pikenurseries](https://www.pinterest.com/pikenurseries/blueberries/).

The professionals at Pike Nurseries have all the expert advice for planting an array of luscious blueberry crops and how to keep them healthy and thriving! For more information and care tips, please visit your local Pike Nurseries location or visit [pikenursery.com/blueberries](http://www.pikenursery.com/pages/planting-and-taking-care-of-blueberries).

**ABOUT PIKE NURSERIES**

Ever committed to its customers’ gardening success, Pike Nurseries takes pride in taking the guesswork out of gardening and helping its customers play in the dirt. Offering superior knowledge, quality and selection in a friendly, caring environment, Pike Nurseries has been an Atlanta icon for over 50 years. Founded in 1958 by Pete Pike, its ability to adapt to market conditions and community needs has made it a respected Southern institution. As Atlanta’s oldest garden chain, Pike Nurseries has 17 retail locations in the Atlanta, Ga. and Charlotte, N.C. areas. Now led by CEO Mike Kunce, Pike Nurseries looks forward to continued growth as it keeps Atlanta and Charlotte beautiful, one landscape at a time.

For more information, please visit Pike Nurseries online at [pikenursery.com](http://www.pikenursery.com/).

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