

Tangled up in blue

U-pick blueberry patch provides 'perfect' socially distanced summer activity



Olive Leonov, 3, reaches for a blueberry at Cranguyma Farms on Friday, July 24 in Long Beach.

PHOTOS BY LUKE WHITTAKER

By LUKE WHITTAKER
Chinook Observer

LONG BEACH — A little hand reached through the branches and pulled out a plump blueberry and dropped it in the pail with a 'plunk.' It didn't take three-year-old Olive Leonov long to learn the art of picking blueberries after watching mom and dad for a few minutes.

Late July marked the start of the summer harvest at Cranguyma Farms, the fifth-generation working blueberry, cranberry and holly farm owned by the Glenn family beside Sandridge Road in Long Beach.

For more than 60 years, the seven-acre 'u-pick' blueberry patch has provided a sweet summer activity. The five varieties of organic blueberries grown at the farm ripen at different times beginning with the Weymouth and Rancocas in July and continuing all summer long with Pemberton, Jersey and Dixie in August. Blueberries, along with their tart

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Igor Leonov, 35, of Westport, picks blueberries at Cranguyma Farms in Long Beach on Friday, July 24. "It's the perfect social-distancing event," said Leonov who came with family as part of a coastal road trip.



Porter Barrick, 2, of Astoria, looks for blueberries while picking with family at Cranguyma Farms on Sunday, July 26 in Long Beach.



GETTY IMAGES



Blueberries ripen on a branch

Versatile blueberries are easy to grow

EDITOR'S NOTE: Respected Washington State University Extension Agent Don Tapio offered this good advice about growing blueberries in 2013 before he retired. It remains valid and we're republishing it this week.

By DON TAPIO
WSU Extension Agent

It really doesn't matter if you've been reading about the great health benefits of blueberries, the unique taste or you just plain have a passion for blueberry muffins, these multi-purpose plants are a must have for gardeners.

Attractive as ornamentals, they progress from a profusion of white or pink blossoms in spring to colorful fall foliage. In addition, their woody stem structure is an aesthetically pleasing addition to the winter landscape. Their delicious berries can be eaten fresh, made into pies and other desserts, frozen, dried or canned for later use.

Depending on variety, the fruiting season extends from early July through September, providing plenty of time for both fresh eating and preserving. It's easy to include blueberries in existing landscapes since these acid loving plants have similar growing requirements to rhododendrons, azaleas and heathers.

Blueberries grow best in well-drained soils that are high in organic matter and have a pH between 4.5 and 5.5. If your soil is not naturally suitable for blueberry plant growth, you'll need to modify it before planting. Blueberry plants are long-lived, so considerable time and expense in preparing the soil can be justified. They are shallow rooted plants, characterized by the lack of root hairs.

Most blueberry roots are found inside the dripline of the bush and in the upper 18 inches of soil. Before planting, incorporate organic matter, such as Douglas-fir sawdust or bark, to improve soil aeration and drainage. If your pH is higher than 5.5 you can acidify the soil by adding finely ground elemental sulfur to the soil before planting. The amount of sulfur needed depends on how much the soil pH needs to be lowered and the soil type.

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Smalltown creativity springs from Raymond Badger's inventive mind

By NICK NIKKILA
For the Observer

There are people in this world that just know how to live and genuinely enjoy life and 87-year old Cathlamet resident Raymond Badger is one of those people. Spending a little time with him is an enjoyable experience and, more often than not, a learning experience as well.

He is a man of moderation in his lifestyle, a devoted husband and father and one who looks at every situation with a positive view and a wonderfully good sense of humor. More importantly for this article, he is an industrious man with an inventive mind for creating ways to make things. He enjoys having projects to do and is always planning for the next project before the current one is completed.

Fans of Badger are well aware of his little exploding outhouses, dust pans and birdhouses built from old automobile license plates, and wooden toys of all kinds for children to enjoy. He is a fan of Ford Model Ts and very experienced in their repair and operation. Over the years, many visitors to the Wahkiakum County Fair have



Raymond Badger stands beside his 1905 Model T replica. Other creations pictured here, left to right, include the forklift, a locomotive with passenger car and a dump truck.

NICK NIKKILA

ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR UNWANTED RIDING LAWNMOWERS, BADGER'S NEXT PROJECT IS TO CREATE ANOTHER ARMY JEEP WITH A NEW TWIST — IT WILL HAVE A MOWER DECK AND BE ABLE TO CUT GRASS.

enjoyed rides in Badger's Model T Doctor's Coupe and the cars of others in the local Model T club. From a rusted-out old Model T pickup that to most eyes would have been unrecoverable, he once

fashioned an extended open cab touring car. Today, that creation is used at a California vineyard to transport visitors. Using the chassis and engine from a small Nissan pickup, he created a vehicle

he called "The Whats It," reminiscent of the Model T and Model A age. The Whats It was purchased by the Mike Moulot family. In more recent times, he has seen the opportunity for creations based on

discarded riding lawnmowers.

Using just such a lawnmower, Badger built the locomotive engine that in past years has been used by the Wahkiakum Historical Society to give rides to children and raise money for the museum. At the request of the American Legion Post in Deep River, Badger built an Army jeep using a riding lawnmower chassis and engine. The jeep was used by the post to pull children around in a military style wagon during the Naselle-Grays River Valley community picnic celebrating the 100th birthday of the American Legion.

After completing the jeep, Badger decided it should have a cannon to pull behind. As that cannon, named Kaboom, was in the building stages, the thought occurred to him it would be fun if it could squirt water. He solved the way to do that by removing a windshield wiper motor from a junked car. With a little wiring and the installation of a switch and an onboard water container, Kaboom could squirt water almost 20-feet. It was a hit with children lining the streets at last year's Bald Eagle Day parade.

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