



WORDS Lindy Schneider | PHOTOGRAPHY Supplied

# Colour Your Summer Blueberry

THE AMERICAN NATIVE SUPERFOOD THAT LOVES OUR  
REGION'S COOL CLIMATE CONDITIONS

**T**here's a reason why the blueberries grown in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges are so plentiful and juicy. The region is one of only a handful of climates in Australia perfectly suited to blueberry cultivating and harvesting, and with an abundance of growers, these dynamics little superfoods should be a priority on your summer berry shopping list.

Our cool climate is a perfect home for this American native. Ideal growing conditions occur when there are up to 750 hours (depending on varietal) of temperatures below 7.5 degrees (also called Chill Hours) during autumn and winter, so enjoy those cooler nights because they have a direct influence on flower and fruit set and mean the best and most delicious harvest in summer.



With a relatively short history in Australia, the first commercial crops were only established in the early 1970s, the Yarra Valley has established a firm reputation for quality fruit and premium taste. *Badger Creek Blueberry Winery* have been growing plump blueberries for two generations, *Folly Farm* in Olinda first established their certified organic blueberry farm in 1982 and if you're looking for a day out picking and enjoying this purple guilt free treat, U-Pick and farmgates are dotted throughout the region, many with cafes and facilities for sweet blueberry fun. The farm in Steels Creek even has botanical gardens and a dinosaur park to enjoy.

One of nature's only naturally occurring blue coloured foods, blueberries boast a wide range of health benefits due their high antioxidant plant compounds making them an ideal snack straight from the bush. Just one cup of blueberries will give you 25% of your daily recommended intake of Vitamin C. They are also crammed with essential nutrients, minerals and health-boosting polyphenols such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorous, calcium, manganese, zinc, and vitamin K, making them good for the heart, the bones, the skin and even for mental health.

Our region's blueberries can be enjoyed as a snack (fun fact: they will not get sweeter once picked), in your favourite cocktail, as a healthy addition to your baking (blueberry muffins anyone?), blitzed in a smoothie, or if you're a real devotee, explore the range of blueberry wines, Moscato and fortified at *Badger Creek Blueberry Winery*, where it takes one kilo of blueberries to make a 750ml bottle of wine. Just imagine the health benefits!

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## GROW YOUR OWN BLUEBERRIES AT HOME

With perfect conditions for blueberry farming in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, growing blueberries at home is both nourishing and delicious. The Diggers Club (purchase online or visit the shop in Olinda) have eight different varieties of blueberries that will provide fruit in the first 1-2 years. Choose different varieties and you could be picking blueberries between November and April every year. You could even grow an edible hedge.

And - if you can grow an azalea, you can grow blueberries. They are the same family!

[www.diggers.com.au/shop/fruit/blueberries](http://www.diggers.com.au/shop/fruit/blueberries)





**H**aving grown blueberries since 1980, the Driessen family began making wine from blueberries in 1992 to help supplement winter sales when their fresh berries were not in season.

After losing the family farm to bushfires in 2009, along with majority of the blueberries, the family moved the business to the Healesville property which was already established along with the café and cellar door.

On the Healesville property having originally planted out all in blueberries, they quickly made the unfortunate discovery that the clay soil wasn't conducive to growing the berries. The property has now been planted out in apples and pears for their other business St Ronan's Cider also available at the cellar door. The blueberries are now sourced from NSW where they mechanically harvest their second quality berries.

Badger Creek Blueberry Winery make four styles of blueberry wine: a still, Methodé traditionnelle (Champagne-style), fortified, barrel-aged and Moscato style. Making wine from blueberries uses the same processes as grape wine, you are just substituting grapes for blueberries.

The blueberry wine looks like pinot but tastes like a sweeter style rosé, but it's not a sweet wine by any stretch of the imagination. It is best served chilled. It tastes like wine should. The wine is sold only through the cellar door. Tasting paddles including ciders and blueberry wines are available to taste too.

You can also sit outside on the deck and overlook the hills with a blueberry margarita and grab a light lunch of pork belly sliders, charcuterie platters, cheese platters or a seasonal dessert.

**Badger Creek Blueberry Winery and St Ronan's Cider**  
 11 Garnook Grove, Badger Creek, VIC 3777  
[www.blueberrywinery.com.au](http://www.blueberrywinery.com.au) | [www.stronanscider.com.au](http://www.stronanscider.com.au)



### Our Family-Owned Farm

**K**ookaberry berries are proudly 100% Australian grown and our jams, syrups and vinegars are made right here in Victoria's Yarra Valley on our farm with our produce. We do not add preservatives, additives or artificial colours. Our customers love our products for their freshness and natural great taste. When we say our products are 'made with love' – we really mean it!

Our berries are available fresh or frozen and include: strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and boysenberries.

We also have available figs, fejoas, lemons.

In 2004, hubby Tony came up with a great way of utilising the not-so-marketable berries, by producing jams. They were so good, everybody wanted a jar, and so now, his wife Frances makes Raspberry, Strawberry, Blackberry, Boysenberry, 3 Berry, Fig & Blueberry jams for commercial sale. Her jams have won several awards at the Sydney Fine Food Show, Hobart Fine Food, and the Royal Melbourne Show.

It wasn't long before we then branched out into vinegars and syrups and had similar success at the major food shows.

Kookaberry jams come in several sizes, and along with the syrups and vinegars, can be purchased in bulk, and we make up gift hampers on request.

You can buy all our award-winning products at our Kookaberry Farm, online and at select stockists throughout the Yarra Valley and at our local Punt Road farmers' market.



[www.kookaberry.com.au](http://www.kookaberry.com.au)

Ph 0415 768 222

25 Lewis Road, Wandin VIC 3139

## THINKING ABOUT A SUMMER ROAD TRIP?

Visit these venues for a Summer Blueberry Spree!

Jay Berries, Wandin East  
[www.jayberries.com.au](http://www.jayberries.com.au)

Blue Hills Berries and Cherries, Silvan  
[www.upickberries.com.au](http://www.upickberries.com.au)

Habitat Nursery and Orchards, East Warburton  
[www.habitatnurseryandorchards.com](http://www.habitatnurseryandorchards.com)

The Big Berry, Hoddles Creek  
[www.facebook.com/pages/The%20Big%20Berry/228095174208159/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The%20Big%20Berry/228095174208159/)

Badger Creek Blueberry Winery, Badger Creek  
[www.blueberrywinery.com.au](http://www.blueberrywinery.com.au)

Yellingbo Blueberries, Yellingbo  
[www.facebook.com/Yellingbo-Berries-139587260021008/](https://www.facebook.com/Yellingbo-Berries-139587260021008/)

Oasis Berry Farms, Steels Creek  
[www.oasisberryfarms.com.au](http://www.oasisberryfarms.com.au)

Folly Farm Blueberry Growers, Olinda  
[www.upickblueberriesolinda.com.au](http://www.upickblueberriesolinda.com.au)

Monbulk Blueberry Farm  
[www.monbulk-blueberry-farm.business.site](http://www.monbulk-blueberry-farm.business.site)

Summerberries Blueberry Farm, Glenburn  
[www.summerberries.com.au](http://www.summerberries.com.au)

Fairview Hill, Wandin East  
[www.fairviewhillberries.com.au](http://www.fairviewhillberries.com.au)

Higham Blueberries, Kinglake  
[www.facebook.com/highamblueberrieskinglake](https://www.facebook.com/highamblueberrieskinglake)

Warrandyte Berry Farm, Warrandyte  
[www.facebook.com/warrandyteberryfarm](https://www.facebook.com/warrandyteberryfarm)

Farmgate sales and U-Pick availability is dependent on COVID restrictions in place at the time. Please call ahead and check before visiting.





**Y**arra Farm Fresh, in Coldstream West, is a family run business with two generations of the family working on site at both the strawberry farm and in the fresh produce shop. As well as the highest quality fruit and vegetables, Yarra Farm Fresh also stocks many other locally produced foods including meat and dairy products.

Strawberries are grown at the farm, and all other berries stocked in the shop are proudly sourced from local growers. With an emphasis on quality and freshness, you can be sure that you'll find the best of the Yarra Valley's berries at Yarra Farm Fresh!



[www.yarrafarmfresh.com.au](http://www.yarrafarmfresh.com.au)

Ph (03) 9739 0049

40-44 Coldstream West Road  
Coldstream VIC 3770

Summer is a season of fruit-full abundance in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. There's berries, cherries and stone fruit fresh picked, juicy and full of the region's goodness. Check out...

#### Direct/Retail and markets

Rayners Orchard,  
Yarra Valley Farm Fresh,  
Yarra Valley Farmers Market,  
Healesville Organic Market,  
Seed of Life, Ferntree Gully  
And many more...



#### Farmgate Cherries, Strawberries & Raspberries

The Cherry Boys, Wandin  
Yarra Valley Cherries, Wandin  
Cherry Hill Cherry Orchards, Wandin  
Silvan Cherry and Berry Fair, Silvan  
Chappies, Silvan  
Big Rella, Coldstream  
Wandin Valley Farms, Wandin  
YV Edible Forest, Yarra Glen  
Kookaberry Berry Farm,  
Toolangi Strawberries, Toolangi  
Yarra Valley Strawberries,  
Kinglake Raspberries, Kinglake





# *Seasonal Chef*

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BLUEBERRY COCKTAIL  
RECIPES FOR SUMMER



# Blueberry Cocktails

Here are three blueberry hero summer cocktails to enjoy featuring our best local ingredients! Leave out the alcohol for a fresh take on mocktails you can drink any time of the day.

## BLUEBERRY & LAVENDER COCKTAIL

### INGREDIENTS

Handful of fresh or frozen blueberries  
60 ml vodka  
15 ml lavender syrup  
15 ml elderflower liqueur\*  
Splash of soda water

### METHOD

In a cocktail shaker, muddle blueberries to release their juices.

Add vodka, lavender syrup, elderflower liqueur and ice and shake well.

Pour the cocktail  
(with the ice and muddled blueberries)  
into a cocktail glass and top with soda water.

### HOW TO MAKE LAVENDER SYRUP

Place 1 cup water, 1 cup sugar,  
2 tablespoons fresh lavender  
in a saucepan over medium heat.

Bring to a boil and immediately turn  
down to a simmer.

Stir about 5 minutes until sugar is dissolved  
and the syrup has thickened, then remove  
from heat, cool and strain.

Will keep for one week stored  
in the refrigerator.

\*Elderflower cordial from your local  
supermarket also works well.



## BLUEBERRY MARGARITA



### INGREDIENTS

60 ml blueberry puree  
60 ml tequila  
45 ml orange liqueur  
45 ml fresh lime juice  
1 teaspoon sugar  
Coarse salt for glass rim  
Fresh blueberries for garnish

### METHOD

In cocktail shaker, combine blueberry puree, tequila, orange liqueur, lime juice, sugar and ice and shake thoroughly.

Run a cut lime along the serving glass rim and dip in salt.

Pour shaker contents into glass and garnish with fresh blueberries and serve.

## SOUR BLUEBERRY GIN COCKTAIL

### INGREDIENTS

60ml Blueberry Juice  
30 ml Lemon Juice  
60 ml Yarra Valley Gin  
1 egg white  
1 dash Bitters  
Fresh blueberries to garnish

### METHOD

In an ice-filled cocktail shaker add blueberry juice, gin, bitters and egg white.

Shake vigorously to foam up the egg white for 30-45 seconds.

Strain cocktail into an ice-filled glass. Garnish with fresh blueberries and enjoy.





