

## 'Blue Suede' premiers: New blueberry recommended for home gardeners

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The colorful, light-blue berries of the new cultivar are abundant and flavorful. Credit: Photo by D. Scott NeSmith

Blueberry aficionados will soon have a tasty, colorful new variety for their backyard gardens. Blueberry experts D. Scott NeSmith and Mark K. Ehlenfeldt introduced 'Blue Suede' in a recent issue of *HortScience*. The new southern highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium* hybrid) was released by the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the University of Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service. 'Blue Suede' is targeted for sales to the home gardener market.

According to NeSmith and Ehlenfeldt, 'Blue Suede' produces an abundance of attractive, light-blue fruit, with large, flavorful berries.

The plant of 'Blue Suede' is vigorous and features attractive deep-red fall foliage. The researchers anticipate that the plant should perform well in USDA hardiness zones 6a through 9a.

"When compared with the popular southern highbush variety 'O'Neal', 'Blue Suede' had larger berry size, more pronounced light-blue color, increased plant vigor, and considerably later flowering time," noted NeSmith. 'O'Neal' typically blooms too early for most homeowners, subjecting it to spring freeze damage during flowering; 'Blue Suede' flowers 10 to 14 days later than 'O'Neal'. 'Blue Suede™' also tends to have a protracted ripening period, a desirable trait that allows home gardeners to harvest berries over a longer period of time. The longer ripening period is less advantageous for most commercial operations, the researchers noted.

The cultivar has been exclusively licensed to McCorkle Nursery, which plans to sell the new release under the trade name 'Blue Suede'. Consumers should see the new cultivar introduced as part of McCorkle's Gardener's Confidence™ Collection in late 2010 or early 2011. Propagation rights for 'Blue Suede' are controlled by University of Georgia Research Foundation, Technology Commercialization Office in Athens, Georgia.

**More information:** The complete study and abstract are available on the ASHS HortScience electronic journal web site:  
[hortsci.ashspublications.org/c ... ontent/full/45/2/302](http://hortsci.ashspublications.org/content/full/45/2/302)

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