



Wildberry Picking Spots

NORTH OF ANCHORAGE

Eklutna Lake: On both sides of the road along the lake you'll find black currents, raspberries and highbrush cranberries.

Meadow Creek: Take Eagle River Loop Road and watch for Skyline Drive (a 90-degree corner). Take Skyline to the top of the hill. To the right of the parking lot is a trail that leads to the area behind Mount Baldy. Do not go through the gate. It is private property. Head straight up the mountain and look for blueberries in the alpine area.

Eagle River Valley Trail (ERVT): On the Old Iditarod Trail past the Chugach Visitor's Center, there are plenty of pickings. There are currents along the 14 mile stretch to the foot of Eagle Glacier. Open areas within the first 6 miles have raspberries and rose hips. Also look for watermelon berries and highbrush cranberries.

South Fork ERVT: Take Eagle River Loop/Hiland Drive exit and follow it up and over the South Fork of Eagle River. Just after the South Fork Bridge, turn right onto South Creek take this to West River Drive and turn right. Continue on to the parking lot on the left. You'll have to hike awhile if you are after the blueberries. Eagle River Lake is ten miles up the trail, or you can swing off to Hanging Valley Trail about two miles up.

Peter's Creek Trail: Take the first Peter's Creek exit and turn right on Ski Road. Follow it for about one mile and turn right on Whaley, which becomes Chugach Park Road. Turn left on Kellberg, follow it through several switchboards to Malcolm Drive. Turn right on Malcolm Drive and go about a quarter of a mile to the trailhead. Park along the right side of the road in the cleared space, being careful not to block the road. You will need to hike in several miles to get to the alpine berry patches. The trail starts as an old roadbed. Follow it for about two miles and watch for trails to the left. The first one leads up to Bear Mountain.

Lazy Mountain, Palmer: There is a trail up Lazy Mountain which can be reached by taking Clark-Wolverine Road to Huntley Road where the trailhead starts. Highbrush cranberries, raspberries, currants, and rose hips can be found in the wooded areas. Blueberries can be found in the alpine areas.

Hatcher Pass: This large area is a popular blueberry picking spot. Take the Glen Highway 43 miles north of Anchorage and turn west into the Palmer-Fishhook Road. The road becomes Hatcher Pass Road. Drive above tree line to get into blueberry picking country.



ANCHORAGE

Kincaid Park, Anchorage: Raspberries, currants, and rose hips can be found in this Municipal Park at the end of Raspberry Road.

Prospect Height, Chugach State Park: This entrance to the park can be reached by taking Upper O'Malley Road to Prospect Drive. In the wooded areas along along the trail are lowbush and highbush cranberries, trailing raspberries, and currants. Follow the trail to Wolverine Peak for blueberries along the alpine slope.

Rendezvous Peak Trail: Here you can find blueberries, crowberries, and cranberries. Take the Glenn Highway to the Arctic Valley exit. Follow the switchbacking road for approximately seven miles to the parking area.

Flattop Mountain Trail: Just above the Flattop trail parking lot on the mountainside above Glen Alps is a rounded knob known as Blueberry Hill. Also, if you venture along Powerline Pass Trail into the South Fork of Campbell Creek, you'll find blueberries.

SOUTH OF ANCHORAGE

Rabbit Creek: There are usually lots of blueberries in the McHugh Creek, drainage which can be reached by first going to Rabbit Lake, then crossing to McHugh Lake and following the drainage toward Turnagain Arm.

Old Johnson Trail: Highbush cranberries and rose hips along the part of the trail from Potter to McHugh Wayside. Watch for poisonous baneberries in the area. From Rainbow to Windy Corner there are raspberries, salmonberries and highbush cranberries. (Parking area at Rainbow Trailhead).

Indian Valley Trail: The trail to Indian Pass is not easy, with tall grass and stream crossings, but it is a good trail for berries. You start out with raspberries, currants, and watermelon berries, then progress to blueberries, salmonberries, and probably highbush cranberries.



Crow Pass Road, Girdwood: Salmonberries, raspberries, with blueberries in the ski area. You'll have to move off the road, so be careful about private property. In the forested areas you will find raspberries, currants, highbush and lowbush cranberries, and watermelon berries. In alpine areas, look for blueberries, nangoonberries, and cloudberrries.

Crow Pass, Chugach National Forest: Blueberries are not plentiful, but there are lots of crowberries. This is a steep climb with a few salmonberries along the trail.

Turnagain Pass: Drive about 60 miles south of Anchorage. Park in the lot and check the slopes on both sides of the road for blueberries

References

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American Red Raspberry

by Leslie Shallcross, Extension Faculty
Health, Home and Family Development

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The American red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus* L.) is a native North American species that grows throughout most of North America and across northern Europe to northwestern Asia. Wild raspberries can be found along riverbanks and road edges and in forest openings and borders. In Alaska, wild raspberries can be found in most of the Interior as far north as the southern Brooks Range, throughout most of Southcentral Alaska and along the eastern border areas of Southeast Alaska.

The wild red raspberry shrub grows in tangled thickets of reddish-brown, bristly canes 2 to 4 feet high. The leaves are pointed at the apex and rounded at the base and have irregular toothed edges. The flowers have five small white petals and the fruit is a roundish, 3/4-inch bright red aggregate berry with many drupelets. The plant flowers in June and July and berries ripen in late July though the end of August. A ripe raspberry is bright red and will separate easily from the stem; the berry will have a hollow interior.

Despite the wide geographic range of the plant, wild raspberries may not produce abundant fruit. Other plants, through natural ecological succession, will gradually displace wild berry patches. For a reliable harvest, gardeners may want to plant one of the red raspberry cultivars recommended for Alaska.



A close relative of *Rubus idaeus* L. is the trailing raspberry, *Rubus pedatus*. The trailing raspberry, as suggested by the name, grows on a long, vinelike stem on a mossy forest floor. It grows in moist, wooded areas, with a range in Alaska limited to Southcentral and Southeast, Alaska. It has an excellent flavor and bright red color similar to *Rubus idaeus* L. The berry is composed of only a few drupelets that may be difficult to remove from the calyx, or stem, and an hour of picking may yield only a handful of berries. Trailing raspberries can be used in recipes for red raspberries.

Red raspberries are among the most popular berries consumed in the United States. Their intense, sweet-tart flavors are enjoyed fresh and in many prepared food products. The red raspberry's bright flavor combines well with other fruits, including many wild fruits of Alaska. Wild raspberries look and taste like cultivated, domestic red raspberries, although wild berries are slightly smaller. Wild and cultivated berries be eaten fresh, frozen or canned and made into sauces, jellies, fruit leather and jams.

Dried red raspberry leaf is sometimes used for an herbal tea either alone or in combination with other herbs. Leaves can be picked throughout the season, dried and stored in airtight containers as you would any leafy herb. The leaf is certainly safe to use as a tea, but its use during pregnancy should probably be avoided because of documented effects on uterine tissue. Tannins in the leaf may cause a bitter or astringent taste.

Nutrition

Current research on berries suggests that they may provide an important health boost and should be included on a regular basis. Recent and preliminary research suggests that deeply pigmented berries may be effective in fighting cancer cells, decreasing systemic inflammation, reducing heart disease and preserving brain health.



Wild Roses

by Julie Cascio, Extension Faculty
and Marci Johnson, Program Assistant
Health, Home and Family Development

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When in bloom, the fragrance and beauty of roses catch our attention. The wild rose grows in thickets and on rocky slopes in many parts of Alaska. Various parts of the plant are edible in different seasons. In spring, the shoot may be peeled and nibbled. In early summer, the petals of the rose flower add a touch of color and flavor to salads, sandwich spreads and omelets. Petals may be steeped for tea or used to make jelly. In late summer, the bright red fruit of the wild rose bush, called hips or haws, may be eaten as a quick snack. Rose hips may be used for tea, in baked products and in jelly. Rose hip puree may be used to make jams, marmalades and catsup. Dried rose hips may be added to cereal, cooked with fruit sauce or pulverized and added to baked products. Candied rose hips may be used as a snack or in cookies, puddings and cakes.

Pick petals and hips that are in an area free from pesticides, herbicides, automobile exhaust fumes and other contaminants. Wash them before use to remove dust, insect or animal debris.



Rose petal uses: raw, jelly, tea, candied

Rose hip uses: raw, cooked, dried, candied, jelly, jam, sauce, juice, cake, tea

About Rose Petals

Rose petals are the rosy pink part of the wild rose flower. Wild rose flowers are solitary or may grow in small clusters. Wild roses usually have five petals.

Rose flowers are available in June and early July and the petals can be made into a delicately flavored and scented pale pink jelly. Rose water and rose syrup, made from rose petals, are used in numerous Middle Eastern and Indian pastries and confections. Choose flowers at the peak of bloom, and pick early in the day. To pick, grasp the flower by the stem and pull off the petals all at once. Pinch off the white ends of the petals, as this part is bitter.

To Clean and Store

Wash flower petals with warm water in a colander to remove dust and bugs. Lay on paper towels to drain, or pat dry with a towel. Handle gently so they don't bruise.

To Extract Juice

Pack rose petals tightly into measuring cup. Measure 1½ cups tightly packed petals. Place in a large saucepan and crush with a potato masher or glass. Add 2¼ cups water and bring quickly to a boil. Simmer the petals until they have a washed-out color. Strain the liquid through a jelly bag or several layers of cheesecloth. Freeze for long-term storage.

Yield: 2 cups