

MEET YOUR MAINE FARMERS



*Worcester's
Wild Blueberries
Orneville Twp., Maine*



As part of our Healthy Harvest campaign we reached out to our local farmers to learn more about the hard-working Mainers that help put food on our tables.

This week we're learning about Lee and Everett Worcester of Worcester's Wild Blueberries in Orneville, ME. Check out the interview below:

How Did you Get Into Farming?

I became involved in blueberry farming through marriage. My husband's family worked for other farms Downeast. Later my husband, his brother and father purchased land in Orneville Twp and built a hunting camp which sat on blueberry ground. The home base farm purchased in the mid-80,s is 3 miles from the original camp. It all evolved from there.

Tell Us About Your Farm.

We are a one crop farm: low bush wild blueberries. We have fresh blueberries in season available in pints, quarts, 5# and 10# boxes. During much of the year we have frozen blueberries in 5# and 10# boxes. In addition we produce about 15 value added items ranging from blueberry jam, syrup, BBQ, to vinaigrette and pie filling.

What is Your Favorite Part of Farming?

I think my favorite time of the day is probably the end of the day knowing we have worked hard and done the best we could to provide quality blueberries (fresh, frozen, or value added products) to our community and to our online customers.

Tell Us About Farming Season. Is it a Year Round Endeavor?

While the blueberry season is late July through August we are working throughout the year. For example while we/someone is selling at a farmers market others are harvesting more blueberries or working on the pick over belts to produce more berries. Others are cooking in our commercial kitchen to provide our customers with our blueberry jam, syrup and other products. We also belong to GAP which stands for good agricultural practices. This audit covers pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest responsibilities & activities. In addition, in the off season we attend University courses offered through Extension, farmers market annual meetings and new applicant meetings. Farmer is not at an end at the end of the farming season.

How Do You Harvest Your Blueberries?

Initially and for many years we hand raked our low bush blueberries. Through technology we have had bolders removed from our blueberry land this now allows us to use walk -behind harvesters. Our pick-over belts blow out leaves, remove small berries and clumps. Our workers finish the process by actually picking out berries with stems, leaves or "mushies". This labor intensive process results in a high quality product for our customers.

What is Your Favorite Fruit or Vegetable?

Naturally our favorite fruit is low bush wild blueberries. There are dozens of varieties on our land which makes any handful of berries sweet and so delicious. There is no comparison.

What is One Item on Your Farm That People Are Apprehensive to Try? What is Your Favorite Way to Enjoy it?

People are generally apprehensive to try our blueberry garlic jelly. The name alone makes people scrunch up their nose and shiver. However, once we explain this jelly is for garlic lovers they are willing to give it a try. It is made to be spread on crackers with your favorite cheese including boursin, goat or cheddar. Many others like it on an Everything Bagel. Another part of our farm business is our blueberry jam which is very popular as a wedding favor as well as for other events. We also offer an array of gift boxes perfect for holidays.

Where Can People Find You or Your Products?

During blueberry season our products can be found at the following farmers markets: Waterville, Bangor, Brewer, Orono, Hampden, Dover & Lincoln. Off season selected products can be found at Tradewinds in Milo & Blue Hill, Ampersand in Orono, Sea Dawg, Maine Tasting Center & Monson General. Naturally, all our products can be found at our farm in Orneville Twp. It is always best to call ahead to make sure someone is there to assist you.

Anything Else You Want to Share?

Please see our video at www.wildblueberryproducts.com. It shows us, processing and the farm.