



ALL ABOUT CRANBERRIES

How Do Cranberries Grow?

Cranberries are grown in bogs because they can be protected there: A bog can be quickly flooded when freezing weather is predicted, sparing the submerged blossoms and berries from frosts.

A bog is a freshwater wetland, similar to a marsh, and in many cases were carved by glaciers centuries ago. The bottom of a bog is typically soft and spongy, layered with sand, gravel, and peat (partly decayed plant debris). Beneath all that is a layer of clay that works as a sealant, keeping the water from seeping into the ground.

Do Cranberries Grow Underwater?

People think cranberries grow underwater all season long, but that's not true. The bog is dry most of the season.

When it's time to harvest in early fall, farmers add water to the beds to the top of the vines. The berries are still attached to the vines but begin to float. Machines under the water surface agitate the berries to release them.

Additional water is added to submerge the bushes and float the berries on the water's surface, where they can be easily gathered.

Where Do Cranberries Grow?

In the U.S., cranberries grow in cool, northern climates. You'll find them in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin.

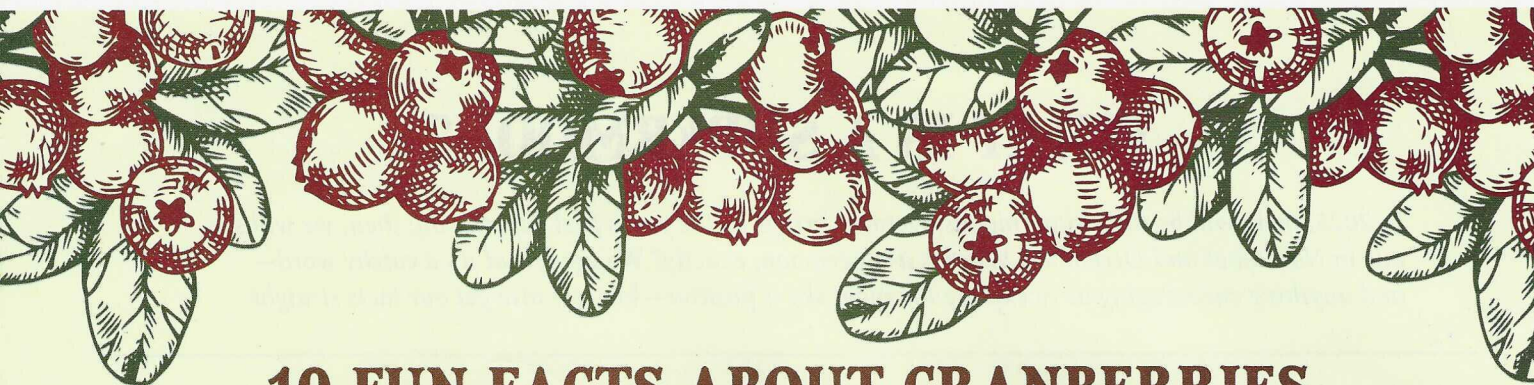
In Canada, cranberries are grown in parts of British Columbia and Quebec.

Growing Your Own Cranberries

You do not need a bog to grow cranberries. They are a great addition to the home garden—and, come harvest time, they are a tasty addition to holiday sauces and desserts.

Here are some tips to help you grow your own cranberries at home:

- A 10x5-foot plot will yield up to 10 pounds of delicious berries. Six 3-year-old plants spaced evenly throughout the bed will grow together to form a thick mat and produce during the first season.
- Cranberries are best planted between late April and the end of May.
- For best results, cranberries should be grown in full sun in a 50/50 mix of garden soil and composted bark (for acidity and drainage).
- If your soil is sandy, remove the top 8 inches and line the bottom of the bed with a sheet of 6-mil plastic. Poke plenty of drainage holes in the plastic, then fill the bed with the soil mix. Scratch in $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of 10-20-10 fertilizer, and you are ready to plant.
- A light mulch of sawdust or sand will help to root the runners. Water the new plantings every day for 2 weeks, as you would the rest of your garden.
- Flower buds open from late May to June and produce ripe fruit from late September into early October.



10 FUN FACTS ABOUT CRANBERRIES

- 1 The cranberry, *Vaccinium macrocarpon*, is a native American plant.
- 2 The cranberry is a member of the heath family and a relative of the blueberry and huckleberry.
- 3 Cranberries are harvested in the fall. Nearly all cranberry crops should be harvested by the beginning of November. Cranberries have a short harvest season and arrive right in time for your Thanksgiving feast!
- 4 Cranberries are a “superfood.” They’re packed with health benefits, including anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antioxidant properties.
- 5 The Pequot people of Cape Cod call the berry *ibimi*, meaning “bitter berry,” and traditionally combined crushed cranberries with dried venison and fat to make a winter superfood called pemmican.
- 6 The Pilgrims and those who followed appreciated the wild berries but did not start cultivating them until 1816, when a bog was planted and tended in the coastal town of Dennis, Massachusetts. By then, American and Canadian sailors on long voyages knew they could eat cranberries to protect themselves from scurvy—making them a cranberry counterpart to British “limeys.”
- 7 Millions of hard, tiny, tart, ruby berries are grown in bogs, a freshwater wetland with free-flowing water.
- 8 Cranberries grow on runners much like strawberries. Each runner may grow up to 3 feet long and send up numerous uprights that bear thumbnail-size fruit.
- 9 Contrary to belief, cranberries don’t grow underwater. When you see pictures of cranberries floating on the surface, they’ve been released from the vine and are ready to be harvested.
- 10 Cranberries add a unique burst of tart flavor and red color to any dish.