Vaccinium virgatum W.T. Aiton  
Rabbiteye Blueberry

(Cyanococcus virgatus, Vaccinium amoenum, Vaccinium ashei)

• Most commercial blueberries in Texas are primarily derived from *V. virgatum*, also known as Smallflower Blueberry, Southern Black Blueberry, or Swamp Blueberry, due to its greater heat tolerance compared to *V. corymbosum*; this species can be thought of as a southern version of *V. corymbosum* with a similar appearance in landscape use, maturing as a medium to large deciduous shrub 8’ to 12’ (15’) tall; Rabbiteye Blueberry can be used on sites with sandy acidic soils as dual purpose shrubs for food and ornament in USDA cold hardiness zones 7(6b) to 10.

• Although *V. virgatum* is more heat tolerant and has lower chilling requirements than *V. corymbosum*, it is similarly intolerant of alkaline soils or irrigation water and has low salt tolerance; chilling requirements for *V. virgatum* typically range from about 350 to 700 hours; fruit usually mature between mid-May and late July in our region, depending upon the cultivar and location; see Nesbit et al. (2013) for the recommendations on varieties and cultural techniques for producing Rabbiteye Blueberries in southern parts of our region and Garcia and Clark (no date) for northern portions.

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