Eat Your Blueberries

Revered for centuries in North America, our native blueberries are gaining popularity worldwide as a delicious treat that doubles as a powerful disease fighter.

Blueberries rank number one in antioxidant activity when compared to 40 other fresh fruits and vegetables. The anthocyanin pigments that make blueberries blue are thought to be the major antioxidant responsible for the high health benefit of blueberries. Antioxidant compounds help our bodies neutralize harmful by-products of metabolism called free radicals; advancing heart health, reducing the risk of certain types of cancer, and boosting total body wellness.

Researchers have specifically linked eating blueberries with a reduction in the build up of so called "bad" cholesterol that contributes to cardiovascular disease and stroke, an easing of eye fatigue and a slowing of age-related loss in mental capacity. People who ate a cup of blueberries a day have performed 5 to 6 percent better on motor skills tests than the control group.

Another compound found in blueberries that inhibits bacteria likely plays a role in promoting urinary tract health and reduces the risk of infection. It appears to work by preventing bacteria from adhering to the cells that line the walls of the urinary tract.

The immediate reward for blueberry eaters is equally fulfilling as the long term health benefits. Enjoy them fresh, in a muffin, on waffles or ice cream, in a smoothie, or tossed into cereal, salads or yogurt. Stock the freezer with bags of berries that have been rinsed and initially frozen spread out on a baking sheet.

When the days are short and the landscape is dull, it is always a pleasure to open the freezer to taste the sweetness of last summer. Get your blueberries at their peak freshness and flavor at your local New York farm or market from early July through September.