

CROP PROFILE

HASKAP

Lonicera caerulea
Member of Caprifoliaceae family



History

The haskap plant is native to the northern hemisphere countries and is a tribute to the native people of the northern islands of Japan. Other selections or subspecies have origins in Russia, where the plant is called honeyberry. Haskap breeding in North America was started in the early 2000s at Oregon State University using Japanese varieties, followed by the University of Saskatchewan using Russian varieties.

Climate Needs

Haskap can tolerate temperatures as cold as 40 degrees. They prefer full sun and moist soil, but not waterlogged. They can grow in part sun, but will fruit less. Water new plants near the base and as they grow, apply water at the widest part of the tree, where the feeder roots are. Once well established (after 2 to 3 years), haskaps do not require a lot of water.

Haskap Description

These small shrubs have a wide but shallow root system and can grow up to 3 to 5 ft. with small, yellow, tubular flowers in early May. Come early summer, you will find dark blue/purple berries in a wide array of oblong shapes. Haskap plants are self-incompatible and need to be planted with a different variety that blooms at the same time for cross-pollination. Generally, within 5 to 7 years, your plant will have reached full maturity with a 50+ year lifespan.

Seeding

For multiple shoot production the following year, plant 2 to 4 inches of stem below the surface. Leave 3 to 5 feet of spacing between each plant and 8 to 10 feet between rows. Water well every 4 to 5 days, 3 or 4 times; then as needed.

Plant in spring, just as the plants are emerging from dormancy. You can mulch after planting to keep the soil cool and moist. Use wire cages or netting to deter feeding by rabbits and birds.

Soil

Haskap plant tolerates most soils with a 4.5 to 7.5 pH and does best in well-drained loam, or sandy loam soil. However, they will tolerate clay soil if the location drains well.

Risk

The haskap plant is a great low maintenance plant due to minimal disease. The only risk to look out for is wildlife, birds and animals eating the fruit of this shrub.

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Pest & Disease Management

The most common problem for the haskap plant is birds and other animals. Leaves can occasionally become sunburnt, but this usually does not affect the plant's overall health.



Highlights

The haskap plant is an edible blue honeysuckle native to Canada, Japan, and Russia. The fruits of this plant contain triple the antioxidants and four times anthocyanins compared to blueberries. This plant is not drought tolerant and prefers soils moist, but not ponding, at all times.

Fertility

It is not essential to fertilize newly planted shrubs, however, it is beneficial to apply 1 inch of compost or well-composted manure near the base of the plant before applying mulch. An annual application of compost or composted manure in the spring is also recommended to fertilize established plants. Due to their shallow root system, haskap plants can take up fertilizer quicker than other shrubs.

Weed Control

Keeping grass away from the bushes for the first few years is very important. They do not compete well against other plants, causing slower or stunted growth. Low-maintenance cover plants can be planted in the row middles.

Harvest

Haskap is ready to harvest in late June to early July. Place bird netting when the first berries begin to change color from green to blue. The berries can appear ripe on the outside, about 5 to 10 days before they actually are ripe on the inside. If the inside is mostly green, it is not ripe. Pick berries in the cool of the morning or later in the evening. Refrigerate the fruit as soon as possible after harvesting. Full grown haskap shrubs can produce 6 to 10 lbs of berries annually.

Cleaning & Storage

Haskaps can be stored in plastic bags or containers in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days. Long-term storage methods include freezing, fermenting, dehydrating, or canning.

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Rating any crop's production opportunity or risk is subjective and depends on the region where the crop is to be raised. Genetic advancement for pathogen tolerance and adverse weather condition has been more significant for popular, high seed sales crops such as corn and soybeans. The table below lists some of the issues of producing specific crops and helps guide your process of selecting your cropping choice.

Average rating: 3.43

Issue	1	2	3	4	5
Seed availability		X			
Scouting requirements				X	
Drought tolerance		X			
Waterlogged soil tolerance			X		
Disease pressure				X	
Wildlife concerns		X			
Yield swings				X	
Harvest ability					X
Field loss					X
Market demand			X		
Soil regeneration			X		
Residue value			X		
Storability					X
Benefit for following crop			X		

1- very low 2- low 3- average 4- moderately high 5- very high

- Seed availability** – Price, lead time, and required lot size are considerations for these issues
- Scouting requirements** – What frequency does someone need to look at the crop?
- Drought tolerance** – Rainfall patterns are requiring crops go longer between rainfall events.
- Waterlogged soil tolerance** – Rainfall events tend to produce higher volumes than historical averages.
- Disease pressure** – Plant stress has increased with the rise of daytime temperatures
- Wildlife concerns** – Deer, rabbits, voles, resident geese, and others can destroy fragile crops.
- Yield swings** – How predictable will the income be when this crop goes to market?
- Harvest ability** – Do we need plans B & C if adverse conditions affect the harvest?
- Field loss** – How much will be left in the field and can we monetize field loss?
- Market demand** – Does this crop have an elastic delivery window and are there timing penalties?
- Profitability** – Is there potential for higher margins needed for a shrinking land base?
- Soil regeneration** – Does this crop support the next crop?
- Residue value** – What remains after the target crop? Can we monetize the residue?
- Storability** – How long can we hold this crop? Will quality be challenging to maintain?