

THE EDIBLE GARDEN

JUNE 2018

HASKAPS

*Sheila Currie
Master Gardener of Ottawa Carleton*

Although they bear physical resemblance to blueberries, the vitamin-packed berries known as haskaps are a species of honeysuckle. Occasionally referred to as 'blue honeysuckle' or 'honeyberry', in Quebec they are known as "camerises". No matter what you call them, these berries are delicious. They look like elongated blueberries, oval or almost rectangular depending on the variety. Their skin is powdery-looking like blueberries, but thin and with a softness that is almost melt-in-your-mouth. Unlike the greenish flesh of blueberries, the flesh inside haskaps is deep burgundy when ripe. Their flavour has been compared to a combination of blueberry and raspberry with undertones of current, plum or nectarine.



Haskaps

Sheila Currie

Lonicera caerulea is native to circumpolar boreal forests around the world including Canada. Although haskaps have been cultivated in Japan for centuries, Canadian interest in growing them, has been relatively recent, likely due to the blandness of the Canadian varieties. Once the sweet and intense flavour of the Japanese berries was noticed by Europeans and North Americans in the mid-1950's, botanical experimentation began in earnest. In the early 2000's, a University of Saskatchewan research program began developing new hybrids or cultivars of haskaps, combining favourable characteristics among varieties of *L. caerulea* from Japan, Russia and Canada. Their goal was to produce hardy cultivars for high yield and exceptional taste, maturing over a longer season. Their work is the major reason why today Canada is a world leader in haskap production, exceeding one million plant sales in 2015, and continuing to produce new and improved cultivars.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, haskaps are hardy to zone 2, can be grown in all soil types, and in a wide pH range from 5.5 to 8.0. Experts at the University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program add that haskaps have few planting or fertilization requirements and are shade-tolerant, although full sun is necessary for maximum fruit production. They are relatively pest-free and disease resistant, and the compact shrubs are long-lived. For all these reasons, gardeners and growers tend to use terms such as "well-behaved" and "not a diva!" when asked to describe haskap shrubs. One consideration in growing haskaps is that they are not self-pollinating. Best yields occur when a different variety is planted nearby for pollination, and nursery plants often come with the pollinator planted in the same pot.

To give the seedlings a good start, incorporate organic matter into the soil, water well, and top dress with compost. Thereafter, an annual application of composted manure early in the growing season should do the trick. As they can grow to be 1.5 – 2 metres high, and 1 metre wide, try spacing the plants about a metre apart. Prune out no more than 25% of the old wood each year in late winter or very early spring. This allows more penetration of sunlight to boost fruiting, as well as keeping the plant vigorous. When it comes time to harvest, some growers place containers (such as a plastic wading pool with a slot cut in it) around



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A GHOST IN THE MAKING

*Julianne Labreche
Master Gardener of Ottawa Carleton*

Clay Bolt is a natural history photographer who travelled halfway across the United States in search of a bee.

Photographing native bees is his passion, in particular, a species called the Rusty-patched bumble bee. (The scientific name is *Bombus affinis*).



Rusty Patch Bumble Bee

Johanna James

Like passenger pigeons once so plentiful in North America, that became extinct in 1914, this little bumble bee could soon be gone forever.

His documentary, *A Ghost in the Making: Searching for the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee*, available at:

the base of the shrub and gently beat the branches with a stick to cause the fruit to fall into the container. The biggest challenge of growing haskaps may be harvesting them before the birds do! Protective netting can help you achieve this.



Mature Haskap Bush
Edythe Falconer

Haskaps are attractive not only for their good looks and great taste, but for their abundant antioxidant and vitamin content. Touted as “Canada’s new superfood” in 2015, haskaps have been called the “elixir of longevity” in Japan for centuries and their healthful properties recognized early on by researchers. One study comparing the antioxidant content of haskaps with blueberries, blackberries, partridgeberries, raspberries, red table grapes, and strawberries found haskaps to have more than twice that of blueberries, the closest second among the group.

Keep an eye out at local farmers’ markets for haskaps from late-May to early July, depending on the year. They typically fruit before strawberries -- even with the late spring this year in the Ottawa area, haskaps were flowering in mid-late April! And if you miss them at the markets, you may see

them at a grocery store near you, as they are being introduced to retail chains. Regardless of where you find them, be sure to give them a try as a substitute for other berries in your favourite recipes. Here’s one for berry crumble, from the Food Network:

BERRY CRUMBLE

Ingredients

1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 pinch salt
1/2 cup oats
6 tablespoons cold butter, cut into small pieces
4 cups mixed berries
1/2 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
Equipment: 6 (6-ounce) ramekins

Directions

Preheat oven to 180°C/350° F.
In a large bowl combine flour, brown sugar, 1/4 cup sugar, cinnamon, salt and oats.
Using a pastry blender, a fork or your hands cut in butter.
Keep cold until ready to use.
In a large bowl combine berries, 1/2 cup sugar, and cornstarch; toss to coat.
Evenly divide the fruit mixture between the 6 ramekins.
Top with crumble topping.
Bake until top is golden and fruit is bubbly, about 35 minutes.
Serve warm

Carrots, Three Parts - A Myth, A Childhood Favourite and A Recipe

*Nancy McDonald
Master Gardener of Ottawa Carleton*

PART ONE – THE MYTH

Were you told as a youngster to eat your carrots as they were good for your eyes? I was and indeed many are still saying this to their children. While it is true that Vitamin A is required for low light vision, the beta-carotene in carrots needs to be converted in our GI tract to Vitamin A. What we need to understand, is that there are plenty of foods in our diets which provide Vitamin A and we are rarely lacking in this vitamin. This link from the Dieticians of Canada gives information on requirements and dietary sources of Vitamin A. <https://www.dietitians.ca/your-health/nutrition-a-z/vitamins/food-sources-of-vitamin-a.aspx>

So why do we have this belief with carrots? To understand, we need to go back to the 1940’s and World War 2. If you, like me are a fan of BBC documentaries, you may have

<http://www.rustypatched.com>,

is the story of the last of these bees, now officially cited as endangered in both Canada and the US.

In Ontario, the term ‘endangered’ is defined as “the species lives in the wild in Ontario but is facing imminent extinction or extirpation.” Indeed, since the 1970s, this bee has suffered rapid decline. Its numbers have dropped by 90-95 percent. Nowadays, it’s just a ghost of a bee.

The only sightings of this bee in Ontario since 2002 have been at the Pinery Provincial Park on Lake Huron, near Grand Bend, Ontario.

It wasn’t always the case. This medium to large bee with a distinctive rusty-coloured patch on the abdomen was once common in southern Ontario. Its range was widespread. It was found in urban settings and farmland in southern Ontario south into the United States to the state of Georgia and west to the Dakotas.

What happened? No one can say for sure, not even bee experts, but speculation is there are several reasons for its decline including pesticide use, habitat loss and the spread of disease from domestic bumble bees used to pollinate greenhouse vegetable crops.

One nasty fungus called nosema is thought to have been introduced from Europe by commercial bumble bees that easily escape from greenhouse vents and spread the parasite to wild bees.

It’s not only the Rusty-patched bumble bee whose numbers are falling. Wild bee populations are shrinking. It’s estimated that a third of bumble bees in North America are in decline. In Canada, six wild bee species have been determined to be critically at risk.

It will take a village of policy-makers, farmers, politicians, industrialists, naturalists, urban gardeners and others to help bees regain their numbers. Gardeners can play an important role.

Whether you grow your plants from seed or purchase commercial plants, you can plant a garden to attract our pollinators, including native plants. It’s also important to avoid pesticides and create safe places for bees to build their nests.

watched with interest the BBC Wartime Farm series. This documentary highlighted the food shortages, rationing and education efforts undertaken in Britain to have citizens plant and grow food. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUsU5s0ofYo>

So back to carrots which were easy to grow in the British climate. 'Dr. Carrot', was created as a cartoon figure to entice children to eat their carrots. The main health benefit touted in government pamphlets and posters was the improvement in night vision. Indeed, the success of RAF Pilot John "Cat Eyes" Cunningham nighttime shooting down German warplanes was attributed to his sharp eyesight from what else but eating carrots. This propaganda worked twofold, to have the people increase their consumption of vegetables and to deceive the enemy from perceiving that airborne radar equipment was now in RAF fighter planes.

So wonderful to know the history of this myth and to continue to grow and consume carrots but not to improve your eyesight.

PART TWO – CARROTS A CHILD FAVOURITE RIGHT OUT OF THE GARDEN

When my children were young, the favourite vegetable right out of the garden were carrots. I had a small vegetable garden in my backyard on PEI. I was also fortunate to have children growing up in a small town in the 70's and 80's where they went to play in the morning and came back in only when hungry. Having a vegetable garden meant they could easily get a snack when outside and they did. I am not sure how well the carrots got washed off at the outside tap but they were certainly enjoyed!

I just grew orange varieties but you have more choices today. Try growing carrots and see if they become a child favourite at your home. You can direct sow carrot seeds in May as the soil begins to warm up. Sow seeds about ½" deep and cover lightly. Depending on variety and maturity, you can sow seeds again in late July for a fall crop. There are varieties suited for containers as well (TEG March 2018).

You might enjoy checking out the Virtual Carrot Museum to learn more about this wonderful vegetable. <http://carrotmuseum.co.uk/>

PART THREE- AND NOW A RECIPE

A friend of mine came back from California and gave me this recipe. It makes quite a pretty looking cookie.

CARROT COOKIE

Ingredients

1 cup cooked, mashed carrots
¾ cup white sugar
1 cup margarine (I prefer butter)
2 eggs
2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 cup flaked coconut

Directions

Heat oven to 205°C/400°F. Bake approximately 8-10 minutes.
Mix first 4 ingredients together.
Add flour, salt, baking powder and salt.
Stir in coconut.
Drop dough by a tablespoon about 2 inches apart.
Bake on ungreased cookie sheet.
When cookies are cool, spread a thin vanilla icing on top. Enjoy!

Watch for *Trowel Talk* the Master Gardeners of Ottawa Carleton electronic monthly gardening newsletter available on the 15th at <http://mgottawa.ca/>

Visit the Almonte online community newspaper 'The Millstone' - <http://millstonenews.com/> - for a column by David Hinks of the Lanark County Master Gardeners; under the Gardening tab.

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton and Master Gardeners of Lanark County are member groups of Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc., a registered charity with the mission of providing gardening advice to homeowners. The Edible Garden logo was created by Jon Last (jonlast13@rogers.com).

This means leaving some bare soil in your garden as many of our wild bees live underground. Leave your garden a little messy too, especially in the fall, as this will help to provide habitat for overwintering.

No matter if you have a small balcony garden or a large acreage, there are many plants that attract bees and provide them with bountiful supplies of nectar and pollen they need to survive.

"We gravitate to rare, beautiful things," says Bolt, revealing his fascination when he finally was able to film a few live Rusty-patched bumble bees at the University of Wisconsin arboretum.

He was especially thrilled and hopeful when he spotted one queen bee that, with any luck, will be fertile and create offspring.

In contrast, the last passenger pigeon, named Martha, died infertile on September 1st, 1914, at the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens.

Ideas for edible planters

Faith Schmit

Master Gardener of Ottawa Carleton

These are 2 of my 3 main quite large containers.

For the old butter churn, I would try sweet potato vine, nasturtiums and lobelia again for the colours and butterfly friendly appeal. I like the cascading effect and would want to keep it.

A former fireplace grate that has been repurposed. It would be interesting to put mint in as the spiller as I am always trying to contain it, with some mesclun mix added for colour and as a filler and perhaps a stela dora or 2 for colour and height.

We also have a wonderful large cast iron cauldron that I keep mint in but perhaps it could serve as a "home" to the 3 sisters with a sunflower added for colour and to attract pollinators.

Did you Know

Sowing Carrots later in the season—June – will miss the first hatching of carrot root flies. Covering or surrounding with fleece will hinder access, as will growing in carrots in tall containers

**TABLE SHOWING THE POLLINATION COMPATIBILITY
OF HASKAPS/HONEYBERRIES/SWEETBERRY/YAZBERRY**

Variety	Berry Blue	Blue Bell	Borealis	Cinderella	Dolca vita	Indigo series	Kapu	Tundra
Berry Blue	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility
Blue Bell	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility
Borealis	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility
Cinderella	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility
Dolca vita	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility
Indigo series	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility
Kapu	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility
Tundra	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility	Good compatibility	Poor compatibility

■	Poor compatibility
■	Good compatibility
	No information

NOTE:

The Haskaps/Honeyberry/Sweetberry/Yazberry varieties in the table were found listed on the websites of a sample of garden centres in the Ottawa area. Many gardens centres listed only one or two varieties as available. The Edible Garden is unable to verify the current availability of Haskaps or accuracy of the listing. One site listed two varieties in one pot.

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About Haskap (2018)

<http://haskap.ca/about-haskap/#1519319919664-7281e860-6ede>