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By Carl Collen

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Blueberry first for Berry Gardens

Group develops UK's first home-grown organic blueberries for Waitrose



UK soft fruit and stonefruit grower-owned cooperative Berry Gardens has announced the launch of the UK's first locally produced organic blueberries, in response to the rising consumer appetite for homegrown healthy organic produce.

The Liberty variety is the first organic blueberry to be produced on UK soil for retailer Waitrose, by Berry Gardens' grower Haygrove in Herefordshire, which has a long history of producing premium organic berries.

The launch coincides with the start of the British blueberry season, which typically runs from mid-June through to mid October.

In the last six years (2014-2019) British blueberry production has grown by 77 per cent, from 2,663 tonnes in 2014 to 4,723 tonnes in 2019, according to British Summer Fruits, led by a growth in consumer demand.

Volumes of British blueberries being produced this year are 14 per cent higher.

"Our organics provide high-quality berries using methods that deliver a breadth of benefits across the whole food system," said Angus Davison, chairman of Haygrove, which has grown the premium range. "We've applied our significant school fees learning how to produce organic strawberries and raspberries, into growing Waitrose's first UK organic blueberries and we look forward to new consumers enjoying them."

Producing consistently high yields, the Liberty blueberry is a late season variety known for its balanced flavour, sky blue colour and are medium to large in size. The variety is high chill, which makes it favourable for growing in the UK climate.

"As leaders in producing innovative berries of exceptional quality, we are proud to be the first in the UK to bring to market best-in-class, home-grown organic blueberries to Waitrose at a time when nutrition and health is a focus for

all of us," noted Berry Gardens chief executive Nick Allen.

"With the health benefits of blueberries already well publicised and consumer demand for British and organic berries at an all-time-high, people across the country will be able to enjoy nutritious organically grown British blueberries of the highest quality at their peak," he added.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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