

Black Huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*)

1-2' x 2-4'+, upright many-branched shrub. Spreads slowly on shallow buried stems, sending up new shoots at its perimeter. Some shoots then arch over, forming a network of fine branches. Large colonies can form, in optimal conditions.

CT native, found in upland woods, rocky slopes, sandy barrens.

Fine branches hung with 1-2" oblong dark shiny leaves.

Dangling racemes of 3 to 9 red urn-shaped late spring flowers hang off velvety young twigs.

Shiny rounded 1/4" blue-black fruits, August-September. Intensely flavorful: sweet, tart, slightly crunchy with tiny seeds. Plant two for optimal fruit production.

Deep red to orange-crimson fall color.

Sun to shade, prefers part sun. More fruiting/better fall color with more sun.

Moist to dry, acidic, well-drained soils. Very drought tolerant. At home in rocky or sandy soils.

Given room to spread, a thicket will form over time.

Use in preserves, pies, etc., and eat out of hand. Thrives as understory plant, as groundcover/massing, as a thicket. Use in open woods (especially thin rocky woods), in clearings. Under-appreciated shrub for the naturalizing garden. Excellent companion for Lowbush/Highbush Blueberries, Rosebay Rhododendrons, Mountain Laurel, Pine, and Gaultheria.

Attracts Song and Game Birds, including Bluebirds, Ruffed Grouse, and Thrushes. Colonies provide nesting habitat and protection for birds.

Attracts over 40 native species of butterflies, and larval host of Henry's Elfin and Brown Elfin. Cross-pollinated by Honeybees, Bumblebees, others. Mammals also love the fruit.

Photos 1, 5: Mount Cuba Center

mtcubacenter.org/plants/black-huckleberry/

Photo 2: Peter Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers.

minnesotawildflowers.info/shrub/black-huckleberry

Photos 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12: JackPine, Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society. nswildflora.ca

Photo 7: Laurel F; [flickr.com/photos/laurelfan/3894126905/sizes/l](https://www.flickr.com/photos/laurelfan/3894126905/sizes/l)

Photo 8: G. Graham, Dept. of Agricult. & Aquaculture, New Brunswick, CA. daafmaapextweb.gnb.ca/010-002/Images/5513/md_Black_Huckleberry_Gueule_noire__5513.jpg

