



# Box Turtle Sanctuary of Central Virginia

Helping Virginia's oldest residents

## Inviting turtles to Lunch Blueberries: Plant an Extra Bush!



As Omnivores, Box Turtles need more than just some worms and slugs and have survived for millions of years eating whatever they came across. As climates settled and became consistent, plants evolved in different habitats creating reliable food sources which helped our Eastern Box turtle become the recognizable turtle that we know today.

One plant that evolved with our Eastern Box Turtles in the wooded under-story, and was once as wild and native as the turtles themselves is the Blueberry.

There are a few native varieties of Blueberries that can still be found in scattered patches of old growth woods, around central Virginia, but the good news is that all varieties of cultivated Blueberries have been created from these wild bushes and do well in our slightly acidic soil.

Blueberries are considered to be a super food. They provide Fiber, and are a good source of vitamin K1, vitamin C and manganese, along with vitamins E, B6 and copper. Blueberries are rich in antioxidants and may help lower blood pressure , and delay age related brain decline. Blueberries also may lower blood sugar and improve insulin sensitivity, and, adverse effects or allergies are very rare.

With all this going for them it is a wonder that we all don't have Blueberries growing in our backyards.Perhaps the long term

relationship with blueberries that our native box turtles have, has helped them develop the long lives and the extreme ability to eat just about anything.

Anyway you look at it, Blueberries are good for us and they are good for wildlife. Box Turtles are not the only critters that enjoy this sunny summer fruit. Blueberries are a favorite among song birds, small rodents, foxes, and deer to name a few.

And Blueberries are easy to grow. Blueberry Growers in the northeast say "if you can grow pines and cedars, You can grow blueberries" Evidently, the acidic soil that is enjoyed by these native trees is also enjoyed by blueberries. Coffee grounds can be occasionally placed around the base of Blueberry plants and acts as an inexpensive fertilizer, giving the plants a boost.

If you are into companion planting, Strawberries grow well at the base of Blueberry bushes, benefiting from the scattered shade of the bush while protecting its roots and holding in moisture, and, strawberries are also loved by our native box turtles.

Technically, Blueberry bushes are self pollinating and produce both male and female flowers, but it is recommended to plant more than one variety for larger fruit, and don't forget to add an extra bush or two for the turtles and the wildlife.

Where can you get Blueberry bushes for your yard and garden?

You can find Blueberry bushes at most plant nurseries, but you can also come by and visit the Box Turtle Sanctuary at The Ashland Strawberry Festival on June the 16th on the campus of Randolph Macon College in Ashland VA. We are looking forward to having an educational booth with turtles, art and Blueberries! Please come by and Visit and get a Blueberry bush or two for your wildlife!



Come visit the Box Turtle Sanctuary at the The Ashland Strawberry Faire on June 16, 2018.

We will have an educational display with live turtles, with a special guest

Look for us at RMC Welcome Center

We will also have eARTh Art activities for children of all ages, and don't forget to stop by to pick up some blueberry bushes



Educational Programs

## Help Support The Box Turtle Sanctuary every time you shop at Kroger

Did you know you can support The Box Turtle Sanctuary just by shopping at Kroger? It's easy when you enroll in Kroger Community Rewards®! Just sign up with your Plus Card, and select the Box Turtle Sanctuary of Virginia. Once you're enrolled, you'll earn rewards every time you shop and use your Plus Card, and earn fuel points for yourself

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We Are Growing and

are still available for  
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Today!

Turtle Parties are great  
Educational Ohh and Ahhh  
Moment for Kids of All Ages!  
As an Advocate for Turtles,  
Educational programs are  
created around their  
schedule..  
Programs are limited!Book  
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***\*NEW for 2018 Turtles  
from around the World!***

Learn about turtles and their  
Habitats! How their shell can  
help you tell where they live  
and what they eat!

### ***All Boxed In***

Explore a year in the life of  
An Eastern Box Turtle.  
Discover how they survived  
the days of the dinosaurs and  
became one of Virginia oldest  
residents. Learn how you can  
help box turtles in your own  
back yard, or neighborhood,  
and keep them coming back.

need your help.

With the recent help from U  
of R School of Law, we are  
ready to expand our board  
and are looking for  
community involvement. If  
you or someone you know  
has a love for turtles, our  
natural world and sharing  
this knowledge and are  
interested in making a  
difference in your  
neighborhood, We would love  
to talk!

Please drop me an e-mail at  
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