

Instructions for harvesting



Pick only ripe berries

Berries should be allowed to ripen before they are picked. There is no point in picking them when they are unripe because they will not continue to ripen after harvesting. Avoid picking berries that clearly have something wrong with them: various fungal or bacterial diseases can affect berries during a rainy autumn. Commercial berry operations buy uncleaned berries because they have been found to keep better that way.

Pick berries in fair weather

Berries should only be picked in dry weather, and morning dew should be allowed to evaporate first. Berries keep better when picked dry, and less debris will stick to them. Berries should not be picked after they have frozen. Bilberries are especially sensitive to frost.

Pick berries in clean areas

Wild berries should not be harvested from roadsides, in densely populated areas, near industrial facilities or power plants, or from areas that have been treated with fertilizer or insecticides.

Use proper harvesting equipment that is clean

Gather berries in a basket or bucket, never in a plastic bag. To keep the berries intact, moving them from one container to another should be avoided. During transport, it is a good idea to protect the containers with lids to keep dirt and dust out.

Berries should be handled with the appropriate hygienic precautions, just like other foods. Pick berries with clean hands: wash your hands with soap and water or carry sanitary wipes with you for cleaning your hands when outdoors.

You can harvest more berries using a berry picker than by hand. A berry picker with a long or short handle is suitable for those who want to gather large amounts of berries in a short time. Don't be too rough when using a berry picker, however, because you could destroy the flower buds that will produce a berry crop the following year.

Do not keep berries in a warm place for too long

If you are collecting berries for sale, get them to the buyers as fast as possible. The forest where the berries are picked may be a long way away from where they are sold, so the harvested berries should quickly be moved to a cool place to keep the quality from deteriorating while they are transported. The berries should be

protected from sunlight during transport. The transport or storage area should not impart strange flavours or odours to the berries. After harvesting berries for domestic use, keep them in a cool place before preserving them or cooking with them. Freeze the berries or make jam or juice out of them as soon as possible after harvesting.

Some tools (rakes) used in picking forest berries in Finland

