

Evergreen Huckleberry by Kathleen Sayce

Each spring when evergreen huckleberry grows new shoots, there is a lovely progression of golden to bronzy-red new growth, contrasting nicely with the dark green of its leathery leaves. The colorful spring foliage is almost more enjoyable than the berries.

As new shoots emerge, so do rows of small light pink flowers on flowering shoots, which are very attractive to bumblebees and other pollinators. These will be followed in a few months by tart, flavorful dark blue berries. It's one of four common huckleberries in our area, and the only one with evergreen foliage. Beat the birds to them if you can! Birds eat the berries, and poop the seeds out all over the landscape. These are easy to transplant to places where you want them; just wait until fall or early winter to move them.

A cousin to cranberries (both are in the genus *Vaccinium*), evergreen huckleberry tolerates sun, shade, summer drought and winter sogginess. It makes a lovely clipped hedge, or an equally lovely loose, informal one.

Plant evergreen huckleberries for pollinator support, for slow growing, easy to maintain hedges in either style (clipped or informal and loose), for colorful spring foliage, and for the flavorful fruit each fall.