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Changing Trends in Blueberry Production and Cultivars in North America

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Introductory Remarks

The blueberry industry in North America has steadily increased over the last few decades. This expansion has occurred throughout North America, encompassing not only the traditional highbush and lowbush blueberry, but also the lowhill highbush, halfhigh, and the rabbiteye blueberry. The latter three types of blueberries represent only a small percentage of the total blueberry production, but have received considerable scientific research aimed at their production and germplasm development.

Concomitant to the rapid expansion of the blueberry industry, has been the development of new germplasm, new cultivars and innovative production practices. To document these

changes the American Society for Horticulture Science and the American Pomological Society sponsored a workshop on this subject in 1989. This workshop chronicled the present status of each type of blueberry, changes in production practices and cultivars, direction for future research and development, and germplasm resources available to meet the future needs of cultivar development. Because of the market demand for the fruit, the expansion of the industry into new production zones, and the continuing endeavors of research to improve blueberry germplasm, the next decade will continue to bring about rapid changes in the North American blueberry industry.

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