



BEST WILD BLUEBERRY PICKING



HIKE, PICK, EAT, REPEAT: **5 WILD BLUEBERRY PICKING DESTINATIONS**

By Ryan Smith

If spring is a time for amber maple sugar and fall is for green and red apples then summer is all about the blues. No, not the blue lakes we jump into or the brilliant blue-sky beach days, but rather a blue you can taste: wild blueberries. These tasty, antioxidant-rich trail snacks can be found scattered across many New Hampshire mountaintops typically from mid-July through mid-August depending on conditions. If foraging for fruit is your thing, check out one of these five Forest Society destinations on your next outdoor grazing adventure.

1. EVELYN H. & ALBERT D. MORSE, SR. PRESERVE

Once managed as a commercial wild blueberry farm, the Morse Preserve is one of Alton's best kept secrets, combining stellar views from atop Pine Mountain with flavor-packed blueberry grazing in mid-summer. Forest Society staff mow the summit fields to manage for a thriving crop of blueberry bushes every year.

PARKING: Avery Hill Road, Alton (park in the Mike Burke Forest parking lot located across the road from the Morse Preserve trailhead)

WHEN TO VISIT: mid-July-early August

ADMISSION FEE: Free

INFO: forestsociety.org/morsepreserve

Hikers can pick their own well-deserved snack atop the Morse Preserve's Pine Mountain in Alton.

2. MOUNT MAJOR RESERVATION

At 1,786 feet, Mount Major is one of many summits in the Belknap Range where wild blueberries can be found growing along the trail. Major is a popular destination for vacationers and camp groups in the summer, so try out the nearby Morse Preserve if the parking lot is full.

PARKING: Route 11, Alton

WHEN TO VISIT: mid-July–early August

ADMISSION FEE: Free

INFO: forestsociety.org/mtmajor
forestsociety.org/forest-explorer

3. GAP MOUNTAIN RESERVATION

A moderate trip to Gap Mountain's bald middle [1,840 ft.] and north [1,820 ft.] summits rewards hikers with abundant high- and low-bush blueberry bushes ready for picking and dramatic views of Mount Monadnock looming to the north. For a deeper cultural experience, take the northern hiking trail to spot stonewalls and an abandoned apple orchard along the way.

PARKING: South Parking Lot: Upper Gap Mountain Road, Troy; North Parking Lot: Bullard Road, Jaffrey

WHEN TO VISIT: mid-July–early August

ADMISSION FEE: Free

INFO: forestsociety.org/gapmountain
forestsociety.org/forest-explorer

4. ASHUELOT RIVER HEADWATERS FOREST

Named after a cream used for polishing silver in the late 1800s, 2,160-foot Silver Mountain is also known for its wild blueberries growing amid long grass and a handful of stunted trees on its picturesque summit. After filling your belly, check out the forest's equally beautiful Long and Sand ponds.

PARKING: South Road, Lempster

WHEN TO VISIT: mid-July–early August

ADMISSION FEE: Free

INFO: forestsociety.org/ashuelotrivers

Pro Tip

Wildlife rely on energy-packed wild fruit sources, including blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries. As you forage for these tasty treats, it's best not to completely deplete an area of food so other animals have a chance to forage themselves.



5. ANDORRA FOREST (CONSERVATION EASEMENT)

Andorra Forest, an 11,000-acre privately owned property on which the Forest Society holds an easement, is managed for timber, wildlife, recreation, and water. The property is known for widely acclaimed Pitcher Mountain. Selected in 2018 by *Backpacker* magazine as one of the country's top blueberry-picking hikes, the 2,153-foot mountain offers pick-your-own blueberries at a nominal price. Be sure to save some energy to scale the mountain's notable fire tower, which boasts views of the White Mountains to the north and the Green Mountains to the west.

PARKING: Route 123, Stoddard

WHEN TO VISIT: mid-July–early August

ADMISSION FEE: Suggested donation of \$1.50/quart

INFO: trailtosummit.com/nh-fire-tower-series-1-pitcher-mountain; <https://www.backpacker.com/trips/the-best-berry-picking-hikes-in-america>

You'll be seeing blue on a foraging trip to Pitcher Mountain in Stoddard.