

**Dick Byne's 2003 Commercial Organic Blueberry Trial Plots  
(Highway 24 and Story Mill Road, Waynesboro, Georgia)**

<b>Tmt. #1</b>	<b>Tmt #2</b>	<b>Tmt. #3</b>	<b>Tmt. #4</b>
	Pruned back to 4', 2-3 oldest canes per bush		
<b>XXXXX</b>	<b>OOOOO</b>	<b>XXXXX</b>	Control treatment <b>OOOOO</b>
Pruned back only south side, taking out 2-3 oldest canes per bush.		Randomly pruned out 2-3 oldest canes per bush	No pruning

The average bush height was 8 feet tall for the variety Climax in row 8. Twenty one year old bushes received their second pruning on March 3, 2003. Each treatment contained 5 bushes.

One sample harvest was made on June 27, 2003. This later harvest was necessary, due to workers mistakenly harvesting the early crop. All harvesting was suspended from June 14, to June 27, 2003 on bushes in treatments 1-4.

Treatment #1 Yield-----6 ½ pints

Treatment #2 Yield-----5 Pints

Treatment #3 Yield-----10 ¾ pints

Treatment #4 Yield-----5 ¼ pints

**Conclusion/Observations-----2003**

1. Treatment #3 pruning facilitated easier and quicker harvesting due to lower weed density as well as a more uniformly open bush. Also, the yield for this treatment was considerably higher.
2. Treatment #4 was the hardest, and took the longest to pick, again, due to high congestion and smaller berry size.
3. Treatments #1 & #2 were also more difficult to pick than Treatment #3. The main reason being congestion, especially from woody weeds, with smilax being the worst. Weed density was greatest in treatment 1, with treatments 2 and 4 being slightly less. Many woody weeds were not disturbed with treatment 1 and 2 pruning methods, however a considerable number were removed in the process of using the treatment 3 method.
4. In general, fruit from treatments 3, 1, and 2 were observed to be considerably larger, of better quality and sweeter than fruit from treatment 4, with no pruning during two years.

5. For both 2002 and 2003 the method of pruning for treatment 3 was also the easiest and most efficient to perform. Leaving just a few inches of cane at the base will promote new suckers. Future pruning for this method should remove 1-2 oldest canes per bush per year. This pruning is best done in late July after the crop is finished. Also, it is best to prune tall remaining canes back to seven feet, and prune back any low hanging canes in the row middle.

6. Smilax, wild brambles, trumpet creeper, and other woody weeds should be removed close to or below the ground at pruning time.

7. A chipping machine could be used to chip the prunings and the resulting mulch placed under the bushes.

8. For large plantings, a prunematic pruning system could soon pay for itself in terms of reduced labor costs.

**Submitted by: Jerry Larson, FVSU Ext. Agent**  
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