

Additional Comments:

1. Gibberellic acid may increase fruit set of rabbiteye blueberry plants affected by poor pollination. It is not recommended for southern highbush in Florida because it can cause excessive fruit set, which results in plant stress and poor-quality, late-ripening berries. Poor pollination can occur for a number of reasons, including adverse weather conditions (rainy weather, high humidity, or temperature extremes during flowering), lack of suitable pollinizer cultivars, low bee populations or activity, and insect damage to flowers (especially from flower thrips). Gibberellic acid is not widely used in Florida blueberry production because Florida's industry is based primarily on early ripening southern highbush cultivars. Additional fruit set from gibberellic acid treatments tend to be smaller, have low seed counts, and ripen later than fruit set by natural pollination. In Florida, this product is limited to use on large rabbiteye plantings that suffer from inadequate natural pollination.
2. Good results have been obtained by using two applications of 24–32 oz./acre (48–64 oz./acre total) in 40 gal. of water, spraying both sides of the bush each time. Where two cultivars with different bloom dates are planted together, cultivar-directed treatments (CDT) have been successful. Using CDT, the first and second applications of gibberellic acid are directed toward the first cultivar to bloom. Some spray will reach the adjacent cultivar, helping early flowers to set. The third and fourth sprays are directed toward the later-blooming cultivar, with some spray drift reaching the later-opening flowers of the early blooming cultivar. The total amount of gibberellic acid applied during the season is normally between 48 and 64 oz. per acre.
3. Apply using a minimum of 40 gal. of water per acre. Gibberellic acid is concentration dependent. See label for rates and mixing instructions.
4. Suggested surfactants include X-77, Silwet® L-77, Kinetic®, or Flood. Follow label rates carefully. Silwet® is used at the rate of only 3.2 oz./100 gal. of spray. Although other nonionic surfactants may be suitable, caution should be used because they could burn blueberry flowers.
5. Better responses to gibberellic acid sprays are thought to occur under slow-drying conditions, such as at night, late evening, or very early morning.
6. Gibberellic acid will not completely substitute for pollination. Fruit set with a combination of gibberellic acid and some seed tends to be larger than nonpollinated (nearly seedless) berries. Natural pollination is important to optimize yield and berry size, even when using gibberellic acid.
7. Individual flowers (florets) are more receptive to fruit set from gibberellic acid at developmental stage 5 (fully elongated but not yet open) and stage 6 (open). However, fruit set with gibberellic acid and no pollination is seedless, small, and late ripening. Allow at least 40%–50% of the flowers to open and be worked by bees before making the first application. Apply a second application of gibberellic acid 10–18 days later.