

Visit Surry Hill in Fayette

Directions: From Route 17 in Fayette turn south on the Tom Surrey Road (opposite the Fayette Central School) Continue about 1/2 mile to the end of the road and park in the bus turnaround on the right. Do not proceed further on the logging road.

KLT is currently fundraising to conserve 330 acres of the 600-foot Surry Hill. In addition to over 250 acres of secondary forestland, the Surry Hill fields offer tasty blueberries for hikers and habitat for pollinators, ground-nesting birds, and resident and migratory raptors.

At this time there is no formal trail system. A logging road leads to the summit.



View of Mount Washington from Surry Hill. Jane Davis

Blueberry Picking Fast Facts

Blueberries ripen in late July to early August.

Individuals and families may collect blueberries on KLT properties; commercial foraging is prohibited. Be aware of sensitive habitat, abutting property, or other hazards off-trail such as poison ivy or ticks.

There are many more sites for picking blueberries in Maine, both in natural areas and on commercial farms. Have fun exploring!

Mt. Pisgah Memories

Eva (Boynton) Smith as told to KLT summer intern 2016, Toby Smith: Eva and her family, which consisted of her mother and seven children, and their milkman and his family spent precious time together picking blueberries on the slopes of Mt. Pisgah. The peak years of their picking occurred during the mid-to-late 1950s. The ever-growing presence of second growth trees eventually limited their excursions, and by the 1960s the best of Mt. Pisgah’s blueberries had been picked. Eva remembers highbush blueberries being ubiquitous. During blueberry season her family would go picking roughly once a week, and each picker would have a pail full of berries within an hour. Her family would drive to the bottom parking lot and hike up to the top of the mountain, guided by a telephone wire that connected the fire tower to the old fire warden’s office. The wire served as their guide many times, and seemed to always lead the way to bountiful harvests.

Unfortunately, their picking years were cut short by the continuous growth of the forest. To preserve the memory and taste, Eva has some of her own wild highbush blueberries in her back yard.

Finding them growing near her home, she transplanted them so that she could continue to enjoy the wild berries. Her homemade blueberry muffins are a testament to just how delicious a wild blueberry can be.



Eva and her highbush blueberries



KENNEBEC LAND TRUST



The Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) works cooperatively with landowners and communities to conserve the forests, shorelands, fields, and wildlife that define central Maine. KLT protects land permanently, offers opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy the natural world, and works with partners to support sustainable forestry and farming.

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Adapted from a brochure created by Toby Smith, summer 2016 intern.

Images courtesy of : Front Image: Irene Vose Robertson

Surry Hill Top Photo: Jane Davis

All other images: Toby Smith



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Robertson family picking blueberries atop Pisgah.
Photo by Irene Vose Robertson, circa 1950

**Where are the
Blueberries?**

**Pick blueberries at
Kennebec Land Trust’s
Conservation Areas.**

Visit Mount Pisgah in Winthrop

Directions: Located on Mount Pisgah Road in Winthrop. Parking lot on east side of road. The parking lot on the Mount Pisgah Road provides access to the trailhead for the blue-blazed Tower Trail to the left and Blueberry Trail to the right. The Blueberry Trail is a more rugged 1.3 mile alternative to scale Mt. Pisgah. The Ledges Trail intersects with both the Tower and Blueberry Trails and is an additional 1.4 mile loop along the northern ridgeline.

The Kennebec Land Trust cleared four acres on the south summit of Mt. Pisgah, exposing the area to the sunlight so highbush blueberries have a place to thrive. The cleared spot can be found about halfway up the Blueberry Trail.



Lands Committee member Jim Connors and Stewardship Director Jean-Luc Theriault cutting brush to make way for blueberries.

Summer Pastures and The Mystery of the Highbush Blueberry

As late as the 1940s and 50s, Winthrop-area farmers used the remaining open areas on Mt. Pisgah as summer pasture for young and dry cattle. The open, fading pastures, with little to no tree cover and ample sunlight, created an environment in which blueberries could potentially thrive.



*Lowbush blueberry
Mt. Pisgah, Summer 2016*

All About the Blueberries:

Maine has more than a half dozen species of blueberries. The most common is lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*). It is a small shrub that grows roughly 4-15 inches tall, and produces small but sweet berries. These small plants of mostly dry sites are the primary commercial blueberry crop in Maine.

Another species found in Maine is highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*). Highbush blueberries can grow over six feet high, and can have berries up to 2-3 times larger than the lowbush species.

During the 1950s through the 1990s, generations of families picked highbush blueberries on the relatively dry slopes of Mt. Pisgah. In natural settings highbush blueberries are typically found in areas with wet, acidic, organic soils. The plant is seldom a dominant species, except for in the following habitats: lakes, ponds, swamp areas, or high elevation clearings.



Highbush blueberry

no nearby water source. It is unclear how the highbush blueberries came to be in this less than ideal habitat, but it's unlikely anyone who has picked the berries has ever complained.



*Highbush blueberry
Mt. Pisgah, Summer 2016*

Visit Davidson Nature Preserve in Vassalboro

Directions: Located on Taber Hill Road in Vassalboro. Look for the KLT sign, parking lot, and registration box at the wooden gate on the west side of Taber Hill Road. *Sorry, dogs are not allowed on this property to protect wildlife habitat.* A mowed path begins at the KLT registration box and leads to the blueberry fields and the north end of the fen. A map identifies fields that are open for blueberry picking. There are no blazed trails. Boundaries are marked with small white KLT signs.

The path at the Preserve winds through lowbush blueberries (*Vaccinium* spps.), white and gray birch (*Betula* spp.), sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*), dogwoods (*Swida sericea* and *rugosa*), and many seasonal wildflowers. Creating splashes of brilliant orange amid the blue of the berries, showy wood orange lilies (*Lilium philadelphicum*) bloom just as the blueberries ripen.



Lowbush blueberry flowers

The fields would revert to forest in a short time if they were not mowed. Mowing occurs on a rotating basis so the blueberry bushes can be pruned to the ground. In the growing season immediately following fall mowing, plant growth occurs and flower buds are formed. In May of the following year (the crop year), flower buds open and bloom and berries develop.

Paddle to Parker Pond Headlands in Fayette

Directions: Headland point canoe/kayak access is from the Maine State Boat Launch on the Tower Road in Vienna. A side trail provides access to the Headland Trail and views of the north end of the lake and far foothills. The clear waters of Parker Pond average 31 feet in depth, with a maximum depth of 76 feet. The rocky shoreline provides a distinctive transition between the hemlock forest and the water's edge. The dense shrub layer along the shoreline covers a hidden herbaceous layer found in soil pockets between the rocks. A few of the common shoreline plants are:

- highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)**
- meadow rose (*Rosa blanda*)**
- black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*)**
- sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*)**



View of Parker Pond from KLT's preserve



View of Parker Pond shoreland