2027 PUTNAM COUNTY AGRICULTURAL FAIR

OPEN YOUTH BERRY CONTEST

SPONSORED BY: Putnam County Fair Authority, Inc.

EDUCATIONAL ADVISORS: Jeanie Houk, 4-H Youth Development Agent
Julio Perez, Residential Horticulture Agent
All with UF IFAS Putnam County Extension

ENTRY DEADLINE: **September 29, 2026**, by 5:00 PM with form & fees
UF IFAS Putnam County Agriculture Center
111 Yelvington Rd., East Palatka, FL 32131

MANDATORY MEETINGS: ***Exhibitors should make all efforts to attend all meetings:**
- Mon., Oct 12, 2026 @ 6pm, Putnam Ag Center Auditorium
- Mon., Nov 9, 2026 – 6pm, Putnam Ag Center Auditorium-Virtual option
- January 4th – Tentative Field Trip
-Mon., Feb. 22, 2027 @ 6pm, Putnam Ag Center Auditorium

* **Format of meetings may be altered due to federal, state and county policies & regulations.**
*** In the event that an exhibitor has a reasonable excuse for missing a meeting; a required make-up assignment will be given along with a deadline to submit. Exhibitors must attend 3/4 of meetings to be eligible to sell bushes.**

FAIR ARRIVAL: Tuesday, **March 16, 2027**, from 3:00-6:00pm

JUDGING: Wednesday, **March 17, 2027**, Bushes will be judged as a set.

SALE: Friday, **March 26, 2027** 5-8pm, Silent Auction
* Best of Show winner will have the option to Live Auction their bushes

REMOVAL: Monday, **March 29, 2027**, 3-6 PM for project books and bushes not sold.

ENTRY FEE: $30 (includes cost of FOUR blueberry bushes, 2 of each variety)

PROJECT SUMMARY: Due at time of Check-in (**Mar 16**, 3:00pm-6:00pm). Project Summary will be disbursed with blueberry bushes at first mandatory meeting **Oct 12, 2026**.

DISPLAY AND POT DECORATING CONTEST: Bushes will be displayed during the fair in the Swine Barn. This is an outdoors area so keep this in consideration when you decorate your pots for display. Exhibitors are encouraged to decorate their pots as it helps draw attention to the bushes. This year the decorated pots will be judged. The best decorated pot in each age division: Junior, Intermediate, and Senior will be awarded a prize. ****Cloverbuds are encouraged to decorate their pots but will not be judged. ****

RULES & REGULATIONS

1. All entries and fees must be turned in by 5:00pm to the Putnam County Agricultural Center on **September 29, 2026. A minimum of 6 youth will be necessary to justify the time and resources to hold this contest. Contest is open to a maximum of 30 participants.**

2. **Eligibility:** Open to all Putnam County youth ages 5-18. Additionally, any club, chapter or class may enter group owned blueberry bushes. All entry forms must be signed and approved by parent/guardian, Vo-Ag teacher, or 4-H leader.

3. All exhibitors are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will contribute to the best interest of the fairs Shows & Sale. This includes your conduct at school. Exhibitors are expected to dress in a manner that aligns with a school dress code as they will be representing the fair and themselves during this project. The Fair Authority reserves the right to disqualify any exhibitor who has 3 or more referrals in the current school year, is conducting themselves in a disrespectful or unacceptable manner, or any

exhibitor who has been arrested.

4. **Project Summaries are required** and must be turned in with blueberry bush entries at fair check-in. If project summaries are not complete and submitted on time, participants will not receive any awards or premium money. Project summaries must be turned in in the student's own handwriting and ***no typing***.

5. **White ribbon plants will not be allowed to be silent auctioned.** An exhibitor may choose to not auction blueberry bushes but that must be made clear at check-in. Details will be covered at the first mandatory meeting.

6. All exhibitors are required to attend **mandatory meetings**. Meetings will address care and maintenance of plants, repotting, and all necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in this project. Meetings are estimated to last 1-1.5 hours depending on activities at the meeting. Plants will be dispersed following the first mandatory meeting. Orders not picked up on the day of meeting shall be forfeited. Any conflicts with dates need to be addressed as soon as possible with project coordinators/educational advisors. Exhibitors must attend 2/3 mandatory meetings to be eligible to sell bushes. If an exhibitor is unable to make a meeting, there will be required make-up assignments for missed meetings with reasonable excuses.***Format of meetings may be altered due to federal, state and county policies and regulations.**

7. Exhibitors will be issued four bushes, two of each variety. **They will choose the best of each variety they are issued to be exhibited.**

8. Participants will be expected to purchase a **3-5 gallon pot per plant** and growing medium unless donations can be found.

9. **Exhibitors understand it is their responsibility to care for their plants for the duration of the project.** Putnam Fair, UF/IFAS, and the education advisors are not responsible for failure of plant(s).

Sale: The price placed on the bidding sheet is for both bushes exhibited. Any add-ons should be placed on an add-on sheet not the bidding sheet and should be paid to the fair office (not the livestock office). Payment should be made to the fair office no later than 9pm on closing night of the fair. The Fair Office will mail out checks for the buses sold after the close of the fair.

School Club or Chapter Projects: Any projects being shown as a school, club, chapter, or class entry must have the teacher, leader, or advisor's written permission to sell the bushes. There will be a page to add to the project summary for this. This is only for those projects that are sponsored by a school, club, chapter, or class and does not apply to those with individual projects.

Missed Meetings: Exhibitors are expected to make every effort to attend all mandatory meetings. Any exhibitor that misses a mandatory meeting will be given a required make-up assignment along with a deadline to have it completed by. It is the exhibitor's responsibility to contact the Ag Office through the Berry Project Remind App if they miss a meeting with a reasonable excuse. Make-up assignments could range from taking pictures and writing a paragraph to demonstrate completion of task covered at meeting, creating poster, or creating a commercial to sell bushes but will be at the discretion of the Ag Office to assign. As a reminder exhibitors should make every effort to attend all Mandatory Meetings and must attend a minimum of 2/4 meetings to be eligible to sell their bushes.

AWARDS

Quality Award – Each set of bushes owned by a Junior, Intermediate, or Senior will be judged as a set on their own merit with a single quality award being given to each set.

- Blue Award: $3.00 premium and ribbon
- Red Award: $2.00 premium and ribbon
- White Award: $1.00 premium and ribbon

****Cloverbud entries (ages 5-7) are for exhibit only.** They will not be considered for competition. However, special recognition will be given to cloverbud exhibitors, and they may participate in the Silent Auction sale.

Best of Division – Will be awarded to from the blue ribbon recipients for each age division: Age is determined as **September 1, 2026**)

- Junior (Exhibitor Ages 8-10): $10.00 premium
- Intermediate (Exhibitor Ages 11-13): $10.00 premium
- Senior (Exhibitor Ages 14-18): $10.00 premium

Best of Show - One will be chosen from the Best of Division winners.

- $25 premium and a special award
- option to sell their bushes in the live auction

Awards Pick up - Any bushes not sold in Silent Auction, all project summaries, ribbons, and premium money should be picked up **Monday, March 29th from 3pm-6pm**. Money from bushes sold will be mailed by the Fair Office after the close of the fair.