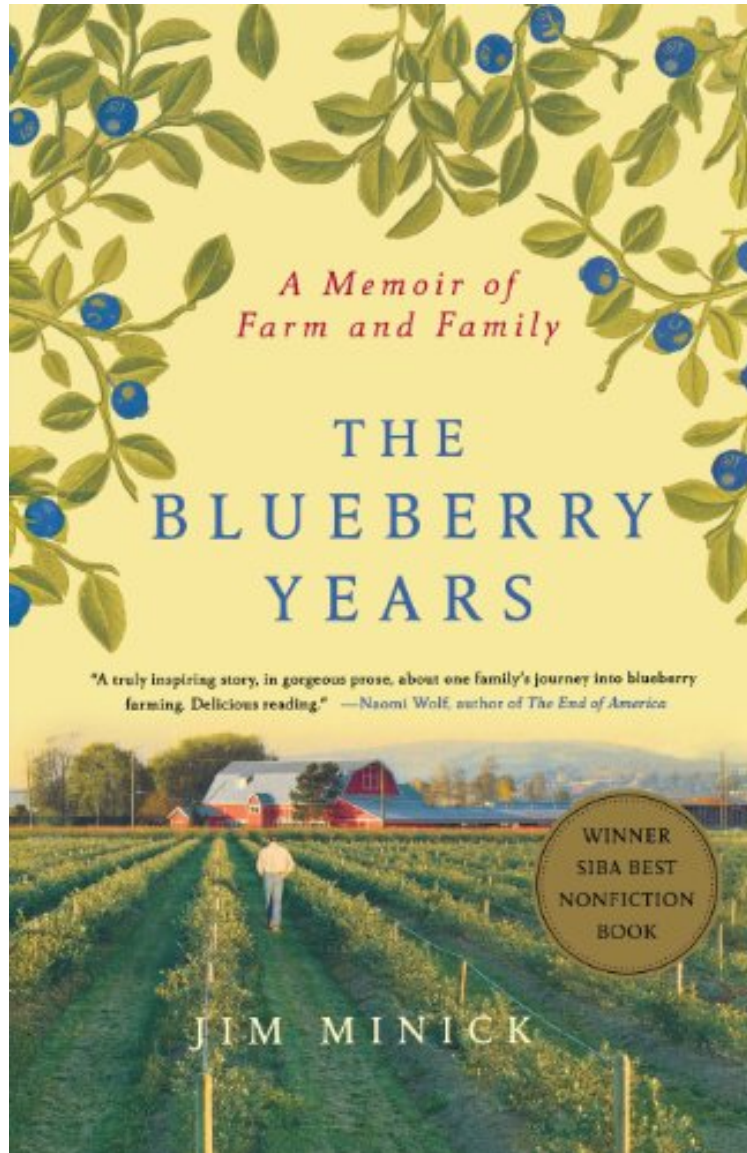


(Free) The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family

## The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family

Jim Minick

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**Jim Minick : The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. For Best Results, Read This As You Are In The Middle of a Challenging Project of Your Own By Bold Consumer I truly enjoyed The Blueberry Years. I'm in the process of planting 14 blueberry bushes. The author and his wife were planting their 1000 bushes that were to become a farm where people go to pick their own blueberries. I had mixed feelings at times about some of the author's comments that

might have been a little insensitive. At the end of the day, though, this is one couple's experience as they saw it, their own unique viewpoint at that moment in time. I'm so glad I did read this book during the beginning of my own "Blueberry Years." I was encouraged as I compared their major project with my not-so-impressive planting. I felt good about my own accomplishments almost as though I had been working alongside these people, fellow workers in the blueberry fields. Well, maybe not quite, but better than working alone. They were good company for me. We get to go through the process with this young couple as the blueberries arrive and they struggle to get them to the place where they are to be planted. This was about the time when my own blueberries were arriving, a few at a time, and I was going through the same process they were, but on a much tinier scale. Believe me, it was comforting to read of their struggles as I huffed and puffed my way around my garden lugging bags of soil, soil amendments, shovels, etc. At the time they were debating one mulch over another, organic or not-so-organic treatments, etc., I was making those same decisions. It was as if I were actually going through this experience with them. I loved it! Just as with any relationship, there were times when I wished I could have told them what I thought. The author put himself out there with all his flaws for us to see. Not much was hidden from us. He didn't pretend to be an expert, and he wasn't much of one when he started. We learned along with him. At those times when I had worn myself out, clothes dirty and sweaty, just about ready to give up, I picked up the book and saw that they were experiencing the same thing. They were dirty, sweaty, discouraged, close to giving up at times. They didn't give up and neither did I. For example, when I came way too close to a bright red snake, which I'm happy to say was just as scared as I was and swam quickly across the pond to get away from me, I was comforted to just happen to read in the next chapter about their own experience with snakes and other 'critters'. I had company in my struggle with all of this dirt, sweat, weeds and weather. I felt as if they could do it, I didn't have to let that snake or the hail storm scare me either. I felt the same emotions they did when I saw some brown, dried-up leaves. The timing was perfect. Almost as if they were walking with me through my own blueberry bushes and talking with me about how they were doing, it made my own blueberry-planting experience much more enjoyable.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well written and entertaining. By Dorothy M. Smith  
Jim Minick relates his experience of establishing a "pick your own" blueberry farm in Virginia. He recounts the hard work of getting hundreds of tiny plants to maturity and bearing blueberries. Then we get to meet the many interesting pickers who come to his blueberry farm. Anyone who has ever "picked their own" blueberries will find this book wonderfully informative and entertaining.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book! By Jan Komrskal  
I loved this book. It is very educational without being too academic. The book describes passionately the story of a blueberry farm and the story of a couple establishing this farm.

"A truly inspiring story, in gorgeous prose, about one family's journey into blueberry farming. Delicious reading."  
Naomi Wolf, author of *The End of America*  
*The Blueberry Years* is a mouth-watering and delightful memoir based on Jim Minick's trials and tribulations as an organic blueberry farmer. This story of one couple and one farm shows how our country's appetite for cheap food affects how that food is grown, who does or does not grow it, and what happens to the land. But this memoir also calls attention to the fragile nature of our global food system and our nation's ambivalence about what we eat and where it comes from. Readers of Michael Pollan and Barbara Kingsolver will savor the tale of Jim's farm and the exploration of larger issues facing agriculture in the United States like the rise of organic farming, the plight of small farmers, and the loneliness common in rural America. Ultimately, *The Blueberry Years* tells the story of a place shaped by a young couple's dream, and how that dream ripened into one of the mid-Atlantic's first certified-organic, pick-your-own blueberry farms.

From Publishers Weekly  
Minick, a columnist for the *Roanoke Times New River Current*, chronicles how he and his wife, Sarah, pursued their dream of starting an organic, pick-your-own blueberry farm in Virginia. They hope that the experiment in new millennial homesteading will make them independent of their "off-farm" teaching jobs and lead to a simpler and environmentally responsible life that gives them the time to practice their arts (Jim writing, Sarah basket weaving). The chapters narrating their 12 years of farming are separated by interludes on the scientific and cultural history of the blueberry and the benefits of organic farming. Minick also expands the story beyond his personal experience to tell a larger story of the extreme financial challenges facing the independent American farmer, as well as exploring the negative effects of agrobusiness on American diets and health. Despite the headaches, loneliness, and unglamorous aspects of farming, Minick sees the farm as a holy place of fellowship between humans and the land. The narrative benefits from the charming stories of people who visit the farm, many driving hundreds of miles to pick blueberries, concluding with a collection of enticing blueberry recipes. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist  
Teacher and writer Minick moves his family to a Virginia farm, where he plants a thousand blueberry bushes. Learning the ins and outs of blueberry culture, they toil to make their farm an economic success while following rigorous principles of organic agriculture. Local farmers deride some of their practices and warn that rejecting modern pesticides and fertilizers will leave them vulnerable to blights and pests. The Minicks find their chosen methods not always easy, but they bask in the many rewards their efforts yield. The blueberries themselves have incomparable flavor, and, when conditions are perfect, yield abundantly.

People drive hundreds of miles just to gather pristine berries in the warmth of a Virginia afternoon. And the daily and seasonal rhythms of the farm give the Minicks pride of ownership and of productive accomplishment so long as nature chooses to cooperate. Very useful for anyone eager to plunge into organic agriculture. Recipes included. --Mark Knoblauch

The Blueberry Years makes a quiet argument for working hard to find fulfillment, and Minick's recipes seem to want us to love blueberries as much as the author does...it's a sweet read. The Oregonian

Minick tells an unforgettable story all steeped in the bittersweet poignancy of chasing dreams and finally leaving some behind. This book is gorgeous and important and totally engaging. Ann Pancake, author of Strange as the Weather Has Been

Valuing health, family and the holiness of the Earth, Minick and his wife started one of the first certified organic blueberry farms in the mid-Atlantic region. Their story takes you through planting, growing, picking, pruning and harvesting as they do their part to improve our country's food system. The Washington Examiner

Jim Minick is one of those farmers we all can look up to. And he can write. As I read, I remembered my own blueberry afternoons picking for market. Savor Jim's prose, then go after the real thing. Take the kids to a blueberry patch and eat local food: it just tastes better. Nina Planck, author of Real Food: What to Eat and Why