Title Phenolic and anthocyanin content and antioxidant activity in fruits of bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus* L.) and of highbush blueberry (*V. corymbosum* L.) cultivars in north western Italy

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Abstract

Regular consumption of blueberry (and berry fruits in general) may mitigate the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and cancer due to their high level of phenolic antioxidants. The objective of this study was to investigate the phenolic and anthocyanin content and the antioxidant activity in berries of bilberry and of highbush blueberry cultivars in Piemonte, Italy. The results of 11 highbush blueberry cultivars, chosen among the most widespread in Piemonte plantings, and on wild bilberries harvested in the wild are reported. Results indicate a high antioxidant activity in the wild species and a high intervarietal variability in highbush blueberry.