



WELCOME TO THE DUXBURY BOGS

DUXBURY CRANBERRY HISTORY

Small wild cranberries are native to the entire northeastern seacoast, but were not considered an agricultural crop until about 1816 when Henry Hall of North Dennis, on Cape Cod, found that by adding sand to the soil where cranberries grew, he could make the berries grow faster, larger, and taste better.

Duxbury, with its industry-leading shipbuilding business, was a great partner in the distribution of the cranberries. Duxbury had many sailing ships on the high seas which provided a market for the commercial cultivation of cranberries. They were stored in water-filled barrels in the cool holds of ships. The berries would stay fresh for months and with the addition of sugar and boiling water, cranberry sauce was an easy food source. Interest was further bolstered in the late 1800s when it became known that eating cranberries, high in vitamin C, could prevent scurvy.

In many large wetland areas of Duxbury, the marks of ditches and dikes are visible evidence that a bog was built there years ago.

In 1927, F.M. Leonard of the Clearbrook Cranberry Company, built the first of these bogs in Duxbury. Leonard's superintendent, Jim Chase, managed the bog. Edgar W. Loring and his family took over operations after Chase's untimely death three years later. Ed Loring soon enlarged the bog and its adjacent reservoir (next to Route 3). The reservoir, taking its name from adjoining Golden Farm, became known as *Golden Reservoir*. The *Loring Bogs* as many old-timers still call them, employed eight to ten year-round workers. At harvest time, the work force swelled to as many as 75.



- Do not light fires.
- No hunting or firearms.
- Do not cut or remove vegetation.
- Do not ride motorized vehicles.
- No overnight camping.

Enjoy hiking, jogging, skiing these trails, exploring these woods and fields. Please keep dogs under control. Leave no litter and help us by removing any you find.

To keep this fragile area safe and to preserve it for the next generation—

RULES AND REGULATIONS

IN DUXBURY, IT'S THE BERRIES

The wild cranberry, in the same family as blueberries, wintergreen, rhododendron, azalea, and bearberry, are mainly evergreen shrubs with drooping, pink flowers that love acidic soil. These plants are the typical vegetation of open moors, damp, low-lying areas. The American cranberry is one of only three fruits native to North America; the others being the blueberry and the Concord grape. Today, there are more than 100 varieties of cranberry.

The cranberry vines on Duxbury Bogs are a mix of two types of berries, Early Black and Howes. The Early Black berries are by far the most common and a standard in Massachusetts and New Jersey. They are a small, deep red berry that ripens as early as late August. It has fine flavor and is known as a good keeper. These berries are sold fresh and because of the dark color are excellent for juice. The berries were first cultivated about 1850 in Harwich. It is not a developed berry, but a direct descendant of the wild Cape Cod cranberry. The Howes cranberry is the standard late cranberry grown in Massachusetts and New Jersey. It was first grown in 1843 by Eli Howes of East Dennis. It is kind of an oblong, medium red, and larger than the early black. Sold fresh and high in pectin, it makes good jelly and sauce. Early Blacks and Howes together are grown more than all other varieties.

The Duxbury Bogs cranberry vines are at least 100 years old. When a new bog was made, the owners would cut some vines from the older bogs and plant them in a new bog. These vines would take root and spread to cover the new bog. Each bog may have come from an original vine that is more than 100 years old.

CRANBERRY CONNECTION

Come amble along a winding dirt road or a grassy dike and enjoy delightful vistas across Duxbury's own cranberry bogs. Duxbury Bogs, formerly known as Loring Bogs, is a diverse parcel of cranberry bog, wetland and upland. It was purchased for the town in August of 1971 to preserve one of the last forms of agriculture in Duxbury. The area contains 39 acres of working bog on 191 acres of conservation land. Thirty-five acres of this land is made up of the reservoirs used for water retention in the production of cranberries. The flooding of the bogs protects the vines from frost and freezing weather and destroys insect pests and intolerant weeds. The remaining 100+ acres are mostly upland with rolling topography and small pockets of wetlands and transition areas. There are many sand pits called *borrow pits*, from which sand is taken for use in cranberry cultivation. The bogs are operated by contracted cranberry companies under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Visitors should be aware that because this is a *working bog* there are agricultural chemicals used in the cultivation of the fruit. As a result of this, at times the property is posted and closed to visitors. Please obey this posting.

DUXBURY BOGS BROCHURE CONTRIBUTORS

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CRANBERRIES TODAY

Our town is blessed with the ingredients making it ideal for cranberry growing; many swamps and an abundance of fresh water, replenished by rainfall in excess of 48 inches per year, and acidic peat soil in which the cranberries thrive. The application of readily-available sand keeps the root systems from being bound together, and the cool, dry temperatures during the growing season keep the fruit from scalding.



In 1937, 25 Duxbury growers produced a crop of approximately 11,800 barrels (each barrel is equivalent to about 100 pounds) on about 600 acres. At the present time, approximately 12 growers in the produce about 32,000 barrels on about 300 acres. The Conservation Commission currently owns three of the bogs; Cherry Lane, Duxbury Bogs, and Matthews Bog. There are a total of 49 acres of actual bogs on over 250 acres. In the year 2000, about 1,915 barrels of cranberries were picked from two of the three bogs. In an eight-year period, the general fund of the town was supplemented by about \$1,000,000 from these working bogs.

Our bogs bring us other benefits. The bog ponds are stocked with fish. Both ponds and bogs attract a variety of wildlife and help maintain the water table essential to Duxbury's domestic water supply. Duxbury Bogs also provide an excellent walking area with scenic open vistas and superb bird watching in a setting that is found in few places outside New England.