Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum) is a slow-growing, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub to small tree that grows 5 to 13 feet tall. The small, urn-shaped flowers have both male and female parts in a single flower.

**Habitats:** Highbush blueberry grows best on hummocks or raised bogs where the soils are moist, acidic, well-aerated, and highly organic. It commonly grows around marshes, swamps, bogs, lakes, ponds, streams, flood-prone sites, floodplains, and open areas of moist woodlands.

**Phenology highlight:** Reddish-green spring leaves turn blue-green in summer, and red, yellow, orange and purple in fall.

**Species facts**
- Bees are the primary pollinators of highbush blueberry flowers.
- The blueberries provide an important food source for many species. Berries are relished by songbirds, game birds, bears, and small mammals. Twigs and foliage are eaten by deer and rabbits.
- Native Americans used the plant and its fruit for medicines and food.
- Highbush blueberry is the major blueberry species harvested by the commercial blueberry industry.

**Why observe this species?** Highbush blueberry is a USA-NPN regional plant species. Regional species are ecologically or economically important but are distributed more locally than calibration species. The NPN integrates these observations to understand better plant responses within the different geographic regions of the nation.

**Tip for observing this species:** If drought seems to be the cause of leaf color or fall for a plant, please make a comment about it for that observation.

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website (www.nyphenologyproject.org) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org).
Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum)

**Note:** leaf, flower and fruit phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase for each; for example, if you record Y for “open flowers” you should also record Y for “flowers or flower buds.”

**Breaking leaf buds**
One or more breaking leaf buds are visible. A leaf bud is "breaking" once a green leaf tip is visible at the end of the bud, but before the first leaf from the bud has unfolded to expose the leaf stalk (petiole).

**Leaves**
One or more live unfolded leaves are visible. A leaf is "unfolded" once its entire length has emerged from the bud so that the leaf stalk (petiole) is visible at its point of attachment to the stem. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.

**Increasing leaf size**
A majority of leaves on the plant have not yet reached their full size and are still growing. Do not include new leaves that continue to emerge at the ends of stems throughout the growing season.

**Colored leaves**
One or more leaves (including any that have recently fallen from the plant) have turned color due to autumn, drought, or pests. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves that remain on the plant.

**Flowers or flower buds**
One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds that are still developing, but do not include wilted or dried flowers.

**Open flowers**
One or more open, fresh flowers are visible. Flowers are "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between open flower parts. Do not include wilted or dried flowers.

**Fruits**
One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For highbush blueberry, the fruit is a berry that changes from green when unripe to blue or blue-black when ripe.

**Ripe fruits**
One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For highbush blueberry, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned blue or blue-black.

*Phenophases not pictured: Falling leaves; Recent fruit or seed drop*