

U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council 2026–2027 Blueberry Industry Leadership Program

Trip #1 Itinerary
September 20–25, 2026

Sunday, September 20, 2026

Arrivals in Monterey

The **Monterey Marriott Hotel** is about 5 minutes from the host hotel, Hyatt and 5 minutes from the Monterey (MRY) airport. From the airport, take the shuttle, a taxi or uber to the hotel. The alternative airport to fly into is San Jose (SJC), which is about 1 hour and 15 minutes from the airport– please plan to Uber or taxi from the airport to the hotel.

Check In

Marriott Monterey

350 Calle Principal, Monterey, CA 93940

831-649-4234

<https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/mryca-monterey-marriott/overview/?scid=f2ae0541-1279-4f24-b197-a979c79310b0>

5:40 p.m.

Meet in Marriott Lobby to rideshare over to Hyatt (~10 min ride)

6:00 p.m.

Welcome Dinner

Side Bar – at Hyatt Monterey

This will be our first dinner together as a class! Attire for dinner is casual.

Monday, September 21, 2026

Dress for the day is business casual (jeans ok, no shorts). Dress for reception is business casual.

8:00 a.m. Class Breakfast

Windjammer 1-2, Level 1, Hyatt

We will gather together as a class for breakfast before our day of training. Come prepared for a day of interaction, reflection, and leadership development.

8:30 a.m. Foundation Day: Sway Training

Windjammer 1-2, Level 1, Hyatt

Our Foundation Day Coach Ashlee Sikorski will kick off the day for the class. The goal of this session is to set the tone for your journey within the program over the next year. Not like your traditional leadership coaching, this training will dive into techniques in self leadership. We will walk through how to become a more curious leader and dive into the 9 types of leaders (enneagram numbers and how you show up in the workplace and at home). We then discuss how your personal values impact the type of leader you are. Overall, a packed and insightful day together.

Class Leader: MADISON

11:30 a.m. Lunch Break**12:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. Foundation SWAY Training (continued)**

Windjammer 1-2, Level 1, Hyatt

5:30 p.m. Class Dinner

Rio Grill (The Barrel Room)

101 The Crossroads, Carmel by the Sea, CA 93923

Meet out front of the hotel lobby at 5:00pm. We will Uber/Lyft together to the restaurant.

Class Leader: CHRISTIAN (make sure all fellows are present, assist with coordinating transportation)

Rest of the Evening Free

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

Dress for the day is business casual (jeans ok, no shorts). Dress for dinner is business.

8:00– 10:00 a.m. Leadership Breakfast & Kolbe Deep Dive with Andrea Walters

Windjammer 1-2, Level 1, Hyatt

Over breakfast, we will take a deeper look at our individual Kolbe results and explore how our natural instincts influence the way we lead, communicate, solve problems and work with others.

Class Leader: LOGAN

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. BREAK

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Bringing It Together: SWAY + Kolbe with Ashlee Sikorski and Andrea Walters

Windjammer 1-2, Level 1, Hyatt

In this interactive session, we will bring together insights from SWAY and Kolbe to build a more complete picture of how we lead. Ashlee and Andrea will help us explore the connection between our motivations, behaviors and natural ways of taking action, and what those insights mean for communication, collaboration and leadership. We will leave with a deeper understanding of ourselves and practical ways to work more effectively with others.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Leadership Alumni Host Lunch: Connect, Learn & Look Ahead

Windjammer 1-2, Level 1, Hyatt

You will meet your Alumni Host over lunch and begin building a relationship designed to extend beyond the Convention. Guided by Ashlee Sikorski, the session will provide time for alumni and current class members to get to know one another, share experiences and talk about leadership, the blueberry industry and their individual journeys.

Before leaving the session, each alumni and participant pair will identify a realistic cadence for staying connected that works with their schedules and establish how they want to continue the relationship throughout the Leadership Program.

Homework: Connect with your Alumni Host and agree on a communication cadence that works for both of you.

1:30 – 2:00 p.m. BREAK

2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Tech Tuesday

Cypress, Level 1, Hyatt

We will attend this session as a class.

Explore emerging and advancing technologies shaping the future of the blueberry industry during this special education session organized by the BerrySmart Technology Task Force. Over the course of two hours, attendees will gain insight into innovations, tools and ideas designed to support on-farm efficiency, data-driven decision-making and long-term industry progress.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Leadership Alumni Reception

Windjammer 3-4, Level 1, Hyatt

You are invited to join Leadership Program alumni for a special reception designed to strengthen connections across classes and build the broader Leadership Program community. This is an opportunity to reconnect with your Alumni Host, meet graduates from previous classes, expand your industry network and learn from others who have shared the Leadership Program experience.

Class Leader: DOUG

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, NABC President's Welcome Reception, Stroll Down Blueberry Lane

Regency Foyer, Regency 1-3, and Regency Terrace, Level 2

Rest of evening free – dinner on your own

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Dress for the day is business casual (no jeans, no shorts). Dress for reception is business casual (jeans ok).

6 a.m. – 7 a.m. BerryFit Club 5K (optional)

Meet up in the Regency Foyer, Level 2, Hyatt

Kick off the morning with the BerryFit Club 5K, a fun and energizing way to start the day before convention programming begins. Runners and walkers of all paces are welcome.

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Opening Keynote Breakfast: The Future of Blueberries Retail Panel

Regency Main, Level 2, Hyatt

Gather for breakfast and an engaging conversation with retail leaders about the future of blueberries. Hear firsthand where retailers see the greatest opportunities for blueberries in their stores, where the berry category is headed, and what it will take to reach more consumers. The discussion will explore key opportunities for growth, challenges facing the category, and strategies to increase household penetration and drive greater blueberry consumption.

Moderator: Kasey Cronquist, President, NABC/USHBC

Panelists:

Jason Glunt, Sr. National Category Manager, Sprouts Farmers Market

Special Note: Your class will be introduced during the General Session. Please stand as your name is called and remain standing until your whole class is announced.

8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m. Stroll Down Blueberry Lane and Blueberry Row, Visit Health Halo Corner and BerrySmart Insights

Regency Foyer and Regency 1-3, Level 2, Hyatt

9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. USHBC Council Meeting

Regency 4-6, Level 2, Hyatt

Please try to sit together as a class. The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council will gather for its official council meeting to discuss priorities, review ongoing initiatives and help guide the organization's work on behalf of the blueberry industry.

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Meet, Eat & Explore

Regency Foyer, Level 2, Hyatt

12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. Stroll Down Blueberry Lane and Blueberry Row, Visit Health Halo Corner and the Merch Table

Regency Foyer and Regency 1-3, Level 2, Hyatt

12:45 p.m. – 2 p.m. Blueberry Boost Accelerator Live Pitch Competition

Regency Main, Level 2, Hyatt

Meet the four cohort members of the Blueberry Boost Accelerator – USHBC's program that propels standout products and entrepreneurs innovating with blueberries toward growth and commercialization. This high-energy "Shark Tank-style" event will feature pitches from the four companies and a live Q&A with expert judges.

2 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. NABC Crop Report

Regency 4-6, Level 2, Hyatt

NABC will share crop updates from growing regions across the blueberry industry, giving attendees a timely look at production conditions and the current state of the season.

2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. NABC Board Meeting

Regency 4-6, Level 2, Hyatt

The NABC Board of Directors will gather for its official meeting to review important industry topics, discuss association priorities and help guide the organization's work on behalf of its members and the broader blueberry industry.

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Blueberry Night at the Aquarium

Monterey Bay Aquarium (Ocean's Edge Wing) 886 Cannery Row

Join us for a one-of-a-kind strolling dinner as the blueberry industry takes over the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Enjoy chef-curated food stations, coastal views and access to incredible exhibits — all in a vibrant setting designed for connection and celebration.

Rest of the Evening Free

Thursday, September 24, 2026

5:45 a.m. – 6:45 a.m. BerryFit Club Yoga (optional)

Regency Terrace (indoor location: Spyglass), Hyatt

Ease into the morning with BerryFit Club Yoga, a welcoming session designed to help you stretch, reset and start the day feeling refreshed. All experience levels are welcome.

7:30 a.m. CLASS PHOTO

We will gather together to take your first class photo and then take our seats at the reserved tables for breakfast.

Class Leader: ALONSO (role is to make sure the class shows up and is on time!)

7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Keynote and Awards Breakfast

Regency Main, Level 2, Hyatt

Join us for a special morning of inspiration and celebration as we gather for a featured keynote and recognize outstanding leaders in the blueberry industry. During this breakfast, NABC will present its annual awards, including the Elizabeth White Award honoring women in

blueberries. In addition to this forward-looking keynote, we'll also announce the winner of this year's Blueberry Boost Accelerator in partnership with VentureFuel.

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Stroll Down Blueberry Lane and Blueberry Row, Visit Health Halo Corner and the Merch Table

Regency Foyer and Regency 1-3, Level 2, Hyatt

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. USHBC Promotion Committee Forum

Regency Main, Level 2, Hyatt

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. Stroll Down Blueberry Lane and Blueberry Row, Visit Health Halo Corner and the Merch Table

Regency Foyer and Regency 1-3, Level 2, Hyatt

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch Keynote Session: Shifting Rhythms in the Economic Forces Shaping the Future of Blueberries

Regency Main, Level 2, Hyatt

As the blueberry industry navigates an increasingly complex and global marketplace, staying in tune with economic signals has never been more critical. This keynote will explore the shifting rhythms shaping the business today – from macroeconomics to production to inflation, global supply dynamics, trade flows, and evolving consumer demand – and how these forces are composing a new outlook for the industry's future.

Building on his well-received economic outlook sessions for the industry, David Magaña, SVP and Senior Analyst with RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness, will deliver a timely, forward-looking perspective on the trends shaping profitability, competitiveness, and long-term opportunity across the blueberry value chain.

Attendees will walk away with a clearer understanding of the economic landscape ahead and what it may mean for growers, marketers, suppliers and industry leaders planning for the future. As an added resource, David will also provide a short summary of the session's key points, giving attendees a useful takeaway to share with their teams after the Convention.

Speaker: David Magaña, SVP – Senior Analyst, RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness

1:30 – 2:00 p.m. Stroll Down Blueberry Lane and Blueberry Row, Visit Health Halo Corner and the Merch Table

Regency Foyer and Regency 1-3, Level 2, Hyatt

2:00 – 3:15 p.m. USHBC Industry Engagement Committee Forum

Regency Main, Level 2, Hyatt

Please plan to sit at separate tables (not together!).

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. Grab a Boost of Blue Happy Hour

Regency Terrace, Hyatt

Close out the convention with the Grab a Boost of Blue Happy Hour, a relaxed gathering designed for attendees to connect, unwind and celebrate a great week together before heading home or on to the industry tour.

Friday, September 25, 2026

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Blueberries & Beyond: A Central Coast Tour

Location: Off-Site

Meet up in the Regency Foyer, Level 2, Hyatt

Wrap up the convention with an on-the-ground look at agriculture and innovation in the Monterey area. This industry tour will give attendees the opportunity to explore the broader agricultural landscape of California's Central Coast through a series of stops highlighting the region's diverse commodities, production practices and forward-looking approaches to farming.

The tour will include a visit to Reservoir, an on-farm agtech incubator where startups are developing and testing agricultural robotics, physical AI, biological technologies, hardware solutions and precision agriculture tools directly in real field conditions. Attendees will see

emerging technologies at various stages of development — from early prototypes to systems nearing commercial deployment — and hear directly from founders about the problems they are working to solve for agriculture.

From field-level insights to a better understanding of the region's diverse commodities and the innovations shaping the future of farming, the tour will offer a meaningful final-day experience and a closer look at the people, crops and technology driving this important growing region forward.

Evening departures home or depart Saturday morning

-Rest of evening free-