



## Gooseberries & Currants

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Gooseberries and currants are closely related; they are also related to native currant plants such as the ornamental red-flowering currant. All varieties carried by Sky are self-fertile and perform well in the Pacific Northwest.

Gooseberry plants are attractive deciduous shrubs. They have a compact, arching growth habit and are usually 4 to 5 feet tall at maturity. They are one of the first deciduous plants to leaf out in the spring; they drop their leaves in early fall. The fruits are borne singly along arching, thorny canes. Cultivated varieties bear larger fruit (up to 1" in diameter) and are easier to harvest and tastier than the native species. Gooseberry fruit is tart; many varieties need to be cooked to be enjoyed. They are used in pies, pastries, and preserves. Sometimes gooseberries are mixed with less acidic fruits to enhance their flavor.

Edible currant bushes have thornless canes and are more erect in their growth habits than gooseberries. They grow 4 to 6 feet tall, about half as wide, and are often used as edible ornamental hedges. Currant berries are borne in clusters. Red and white currants are milder in flavor than gooseberries and are the best for fresh eating. Black currants have a strong, distinctive flavor. Like gooseberries, currants are excellent in jams, jellies, and pastry. They also make a flavorful wine.

Sky also carries the jostaberry, which is a hybrid between a gooseberry and a currant. The fruit has characteristics of both parents.

Gooseberries, currants, and jostaberries do well in nearly any type of moderately fertile soil. They tolerate partial shade but produce best if given full sun. Regular fertilization is not usually required, but if you want more vigorous growth you can use an all-purpose or rose and flower food. Fertilize in early to mid spring before fruit set. Currants and gooseberries are fairly drought tolerant once established, but for best fruit production irrigate during dry periods. Mulch drip zones of plants with compost.

Each cane will produce fruit for several years, with the second to fourth year canes being the most productive. Unpruned plants can become overcrowded with canes, reducing the fruit size and increasing the potential for disease problems. For best production, thin the plant to 10 to 12 canes to start. Each year in early spring, prune out 3 to 4 old canes and allow 3 to four new ones to grow; prune out the rest of the new growth. Prune each cane you're cutting out right down to its base. This allows a maximum of fruit-bearing wood to be maintained.

### WHITE CURRANT VARIETY

**Bar-le-duc White Currant** Very sweet, mild-flavored translucent white berries in medium to large clusters. Excellent fresh or in preserves.

### PINK CURRANT VARIETY

**Champagne Pink Currant** Highly flavored, sweet, table variety. Translucent rosy pink when ripe. Heirloom variety. Grows 3-5 feet tall and wide. Very hardy.

### RED CURRANT VARIETIES

**Cherry Red Currant** Large, dark red, high quality fruit. Tart flavor; grown commercially for redcurrant jelly. Resistant to powdery mildew. Very hardy and prolific.

**Heros Red Currant** Large, bright red berries in long cluster. Compact, prolific variety; great for containers. Developed in Holland.

**Pomona Red Currant** Large, dark red berries in 4" long clusters. Sweeter than many varieties. Great for fresh eating, juice, and jelly. Compact, hardy plant developed in Canada.

**Red Lake Red Currant** Large, dark red berries in medium to large clusters. Early bearing; most widely grown red currant. Ripens July.

**Rubina Red Currant** Large clusters of dark red berries with an excellent sweet flavor. Hardy spreading variety from Sweden.

### BLACK CURRANT VARIETIES

**Belaruskaja Black Currant** New introduction from Eastern Europe with sweet black berries and a unique floral aroma. Resistant to white pine blister rust.

**Consort Black Currant** Medium clusters of somewhat soft black fruit. Prominent, sweet, unique flavor. Excellent dried; good source of Vitamin C. Resistant to white pine blister rust.

**Crandall Black Currant (Clove Currant)** Large, jet-black fruit in fall have a sweeter flavor than most black currants. Very ornamental plant: bright yellow, spicy-fragrant flowers in spring, good fall color. Great ornamental edible hedge.

**Selechenskaya Black Currant** Large, sweet, black berries. Exceptionally cold hardy and disease resistant plant. Productive and early ripening.

### GOOSEBERRY VARIETIES

**Friend** Medium to large, sweet, pinkish-red berries. Almost thornless variety from the Ukraine; very easy to pick!

**Little Ben** A compact sport of Hinnomaki Red. Medium-sized dark red fruit. Tart skin and sweet flesh. Productive, disease resistant and very hardy. Grows only about 2-3 feet tall. Great for containers or intensive planting. Thorny.

**Pixwell** Medium-sized green oval fruit becomes pink when ripe on nearly thornless canes. Great for jams, jellies, and pies. Nice fall color. Grows 4-5 feet tall. Originated in North Dakota. Hardy to -30°.

**Shefford** Sweet, crisp, golden berries with excellent flavor. Almost thornless variety from Canada; very easy to pick! Cold hardy, disease resistant, compact, and productive bushes.

### CURRENT-GOOSEBERRY HYBRID (JOSTABERRY)

**Black Jostaberry** Cross between a black currant and a gooseberry. Vigorous habit and high Vitamin C content of black currant; the berry turns almost black when ripe, with a full gooseberry flavor with black currant overtones. Resistant to powdery mildew and pine blister rust; thornless. Grows to 6 feet tall. Hardy to -35°F.