



## 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 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 currants. 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.

### **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.

### CURRENT VARIETIES BLACK

**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.

**Kantata 50 Black Currant** Large, juicy, low-acid berries with the distinctive black-currant flavor and aroma. Very productive plants.

**Lentaj Black Currant** Jet-black berries are sweet-tart, great for fresh eating. Attractive compact bush.

### CURRENT VARIETIES PINK

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

### CURRENT VARIETIES RED

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

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

### CURRENT VARIETIES WHITE

**Primus White Currant** Very sweet white berries in medium to large clusters. Very high in Vitamin C; mild flavor. Very productive plants.

**White Transparent Currant** Sweet, mild-flavored translucent white berries in large clusters. French heirloom with compact habit.

### GOOSEBERRY VARIETIES

**Black Velvet** Very large, sweet, dark purple-red fruit with almost blueberry-like flavor. Good for fresh eating or in jams, jellies, and desserts. Good disease resistance. Very hardy.

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

**Hinnomaki Red** Medium-sized dark red fruit. Tart skin and sweet flesh. Productive, disease resistant and very hardy variety from Finland. Grows about 3-5 feet tall and spreads farther.

**Hinnomaki Yellow** Medium-sized fruit is yellow-green when ripe. Very aromatic flavor with a luscious apricot aftertaste. Disease resistant and very hardy variety from Finland. Grows about 3 feet tall and spreads farther.