



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

“Dwarf Fruits and berries for the Home Garden”

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Outline

- Currants
- Gooseberries
- Jostaberries
- Honeyberries
- Elderberries





Family: Grossulariaceae

Genus: Ribes

Currants

- Red (*Ribes rubrum*)
- White (*Ribes rubrum*)
- Black (*Ribes nigrum*)

Gooseberries (*Ribes uva-crispa*)

Jostaberry (Currant X Gooseberry)





Red and White Currants

- Small shrub, 3-5 ft tall
- Non-thorny
- Deciduous
- Very hardy
- Full to partial shade
- Can tolerate most soils but prefer heavier soil
- Soil pH of 5.5-7
- Self-fruitful
- Flowers are borne toward the base of 1-year-old stems and on spurs on older stems





Red and White Currants

- Small berries
- Insect pollinated
- Prolonged flowering
- Fruit size larger with cross pollination





Propagation and planting

- Currants are propagated from hardwood cuttings of year-old wood.
- Before planting remove damaged roots/stems
- Cut back top portion 8-10''
- Lowest branch should be at soil depth.
- Plant 3-5' within the row.





Red Currants cultivars

- Jonkheer van Tets (early season-July)
- Wilder (early season-July)
- Red Jade (early season-July)
- Red Lake (mid season-Aug)
- Red Start (mid season-Aug)
- Rovada (late season-Sep)



White Currants cultivars

- Blanka (mid season-September)
- Primus (mid season-September)
- Pink Champagne (mid season-September)
Very sweet
- White Imperial (mid season-September)
Very sweet





Black Currant *Ribes nigrum*

- Native to Northern Europe and Northern Asia
- Grown more commonly in northern areas
- Never widely planted in North America
- Unique taste
- Cordial, cassis, Cider & Black, syrup
- Extremely high Vitamin C content
- Anti-Inflammatory
- Plant looks very similar to *R. rubrum*
- Strong smell from leaves and stem





Black Currant cultivars

- Ben Chaska
- Ben Como
- Ben Lomond
- Ben Sarek
- Consort
- Crandall
- Crusader
- Titania





General Growing condition for Currants

- Can tolerate mid-winter lows of -40F or lower
- Require 800-1600 hr chilling period (32-45F)
- 160-200 GGD
- 120-140 frost free days
- USDA hardiness zone: 3-5
- Will tolerate partial sun





Site Selection for Currants

- Currants are cold hardy but not heat tolerant.
- High summer heat can cause early defoliation and sun scald on the fruit.
- Plant on north slopes in warm locations (several days >90 F)
- Soils with high organic matter preferred
- Water table should not be less than 3' deep
- Can be planted in raised beds if needed





Plant maintenance

- Currants do not compete well with weeds, weed control is critical
- N and K are the most limiting nutrients
- Additions of organic matter before planting is recommended
- Amending the soil before planting with K and P.
- Currants are tolerant of dry conditions, no need for irrigation in WI.



Training System - Bush



Training System- Fan



Training System- Cordon



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Pruning

- Year 1: Remove all but 6-8 canes
- Year 2: Keep 3-4 2-yr old shoot plus 4-5 1-yr old shoots
- Year 3: 3-4 each of 1, 2, and 3 yr old canes
- Year 4 and beyond: Remove all 4 yr old canes and keep 4 new 1 yr old canes.





Gooseberries (*Ribes uva-crispa*)

- **American - *Ribes hirtellum***
 - Lower fruit quality
 - Disease resistance
- **European- *Ribes uva-crispa***
 - Disease susceptible
 - Europe to western Asia
 - Bigger fruit and more flavor
- Common cultivars are hybrids
- Cultivated primarily in Britain
- Gooseberries ripen starting about mid-June and the latest are ripe about mid-August





Gooseberry

- Small shrubs 2-5 ft tall
- Growth habit depends on cultivar.
- Fruit are green to red
- Thorny
- Self-fruitful
- Rich, moist, well- drained soil preferred.
- Tolerate a wide range of soil types.
- Avoid waterlogged soils.
- pH of about 6.5





Gooseberry

- Plant 3-5' within the row.
- After planting, prune all canes back to four to six aboveground buds. The resulting low bud count encourages the development of vigorous new canes.
- Best propagation method is by layering.
- Bend down a low growing branch, pin it down with a hooked wire, cover with 2-3' soil.
- Leave base and tip of branch exposed.
- Cut off the plant next spring and transplant.



Gooseberry

- Pruning is done in the winter
- The majority of fruit is produced on the 2- and 3-year- old shoots
- Canes that are 4 years or older produce very little fruit.
- Bushes are spiny and will become dense thickets without regular pruning.
- Remove all dead and diseased canes
- A mature shrub should have 9 to 12 canes once pruning is completed.



Gooseberry cultivars

Variety	Hardiness (zone 4 to zone 3)	Powdery mildew	Description
Captivator	Excellent to very good	Resistant	Large, sweet, reddish fruit on tall, hardy plants bearing few spines.
Colossal	Excellent to very good	Tolerant	Fruit are very large and deep red when fully mature. Vigorous, hardy, and tolerant of white pine blister rust.
Hinnomaki Red	Excellent to very good	Resistant	Sweet, flavorful berries have tart skin. Productive, moderately vigorous plants. May fruit the year of planting.
Invicta	Excellent to very good	Resistant	Very high yields of large green berries on vigorous, very spiny plants. Fruit has a mild flavor. Moderate resistance to blister rust.
Poorman	Excellent to very good	Resistant	An excellent choice for the home gardener. Large fruit has good flavor and ripens over a long harvest season. Vigorous plants have only a few small thorns.
Tixia™	Excellent to very good	Resistant	Nearly thornless with large, bright red, teardrop-shaped fruit.
Welcome (1957)	Excellent to very good	Moderately resistant	Reddish fruit is somewhat tart. Hardy plants are vigorous once established, upright and nearly spine-free.



Jostaberry

- 8 ft tall a lot of growth, sweet as goose berries but intensity of black currant
- Not spiky, stem are smooth, beautiful flowers
- Easy to propagate just push in the ground the soil in the fall
- Easy to grow, deer seem to leave it alone for the most part
- Drought and wet foot tolerant
- Productive in partial shade.





Jostaberry

- Disease resistant
- Self-fertile
- **Climate.** Hardy. Tolerate -30F midwinter
- **Soils.** Widely adapted. Sensitive to salts
- **Roots.** Shallow rooted
- **Shoots.** Short statured. Currants smooth. Gooseberries spiny.
- **Spacing.** 3-4 feet apart in rows.
- **Training.** Usually a free standing bush
- **Pruning.** Renewal pruning





Jostaberry

- Require a well-drained slightly acid soil
- High organic matter
- Incorporate compost before planting
- Space Bushes 6 feet apart
- Prune during winter by removing dead and some of the old canes to open the canopy.
- Cultivars:
 - Orus 8: excellent eating berries
 - Red Josta: very sweet; berries have red highlights
 - Jogranda: has violet berries





Honeyberry - Haskap (*Lonicera caerulea*)

- Deciduous shrub 4-7 ft tall
- Native from Canada, Japan, Russia
- The name Haskap derives from the Japanese name
- Health benefits due to its high phenolic, anthocyanin content





Honeyberry - Haskap (*Lonicera caerulea*)

- This plant typically flowers in early May with the fruit ready to harvest in late June early July.
- The berries are a dark blue/purple color and come in a wide array of roundish shapes.
- The flavor description is highly subjective, but the most common description is a blueberry raspberry combination.





Honeyberry - Haskap (*Lonicera caerulea*)

- Plant 3-5 ft apart and should be planted slightly deeper than the original nursery container.
- Water frequently until it is established, the first year or so and then keep the soil around the plant moist for the rest of the plant's life.
- Mulch around plants to keep soil evenly moist.
- Doesn't usually need to be fertilized, sometimes a bit of iron can be needed.
- Haskap plants are self incompatible. They need another plant of a different variety to be pollinated and get fruit.





- Not much pruning but they can be pruned to suit your yard.
- Most pruning is done for commercial production. This type of pruning is to make sure that the mechanical harvester can easily harvest the fruit.
- Once the plant gets old and unproductive the bush can be chopped down about half a foot above the surface and allowed to re-grow. This will rejuvenate the plant.
- Bird protection is required bare, some sort of netting over your bushes works well.



Elderberry *Sambucus spp.*

- America Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)
- Europe Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)
- American is more cold hardy.
- Multi-stemmed bush
- Fruit is purplish black $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter
- Can be eaten right off the bush and has a sweet taste.
- It is hardy to zone 3 and has been found as far north as zone 2
- Unripe fruit is poisonous.





Elderberry *Sambucus spp.*

- The flowers and fruit can be made into teas, tinctures, drinks, distilled spirits, wines and cordials, baked goods, jams and jellies.
- Flowers are edible too
- The berry juice makes a natural dye or food colorant
- "superfruit" due to its high level of antioxidants and associated health benefits.





Elderberry *Sambucus spp.*

- 8 ft or more tall
- Extremely cold hardy
- Full sun to partial shade
- Widely adapted to soils but prefer rich, moist soil with good drainage.
- pH 6 to 6.5
- Shallow rooted- mulch is recommended
- Drought susceptible! They like moist soil.
- Addition of compost at planting is recommended.



Elderberry- maintenance

- Pruning: 1) annually removing dead or weak stems; 2) shorten stems by about 1/3; or 3) cut all stems to the ground to entirely rejuvenate.
- Elderberry blooms on new growth of the current season, so pruning should be completed in late winter or early spring.
- No fertilizer is needed during the first years if compost is mix when planting.





Resources

- Growing Currants, Gooseberries and elderberries in WI

<https://fruit.webhosting.cals.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2011/06/Growing-Currants-Gooseberries-and-Elderberries-in-Wisconsin.pdf>

- University of Minnesota Yard and Garden fruit

<https://extension.umn.edu/find-plants/fruit>

- Home fruit Cultivars for Southern Wisconsin

<https://learningstore.extension.wisc.edu/collections/fruit-c78/products/home-fruit-cultivars-for-southern-wisconsin-p395>

- Elderberry Production

<https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/ElderberryGuideComplete.pdf>