

CURRANTS & GOOSEBERRIES

Currants and gooseberries are a beautiful addition to the landscape with bright spring flowers, colorful berries and lobed foliage. Gooseberries characteristically have striped, slightly fuzzy fruit and thorny stems. Both produce small and tart berries great for pies, jams, jellies and preserves. They are high in vitamins A, B, and C, as well as several minerals.

Pollination: Most black currants are not self fertile, so choose two different varieties for pollination. All other currants and gooseberries are self fertile. However, growing two varieties has been shown to increase production. Jostaberries are self-fertile.

Planting: Spacing varies with your selection.

Black currants	5-6 feet apart
Red & white currants	3-5 feet apart
Gooseberries	2-5 feet apart
Jostaberries	6-8 feet apart

Culture: These berries prefer well-drained soils, kept moist but not soggy. They have shallow roots, so cultivate only near the surface.

Pruning: The best time to prune is in late winter when the bush is dormant. Generally you do not need to start pruning until the bush is well established, two to three years after planting. Techniques for pruning are specific for certain types of bushes.

Black currants bear fruit on one year old wood and spurs arising off two year old wood. Remove one-fourth to one-third of all two year wood, as well as older and weak wood. New shoots are pale and tan. Two year wood is gray and older wood is black.

Red and white currants bear fruit on two to three year old wood. Remove branches more than three years old. Then remove all but six of the new shoots.

Gooseberries bear fruit on two to four year old wood. They are pruned like red currants, removing wood older than four years (this wood is dark with multiple branching). Thin the new shoots to the strongest six.