



Gardeners Helping Gardeners Succeed

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All About Gooseberries & Currants

Perhaps one of the more traditional fruiting shrubs grown for years for jams and jellies—the small berries are easily picked and require little preparation besides washing before eating. These sweet, succulent little berries are perennial favorites of birds, too, so beware of a little competition during the harvesting period.

Gooseberries & currants will thrive in most soil types including sandy or clay types, however, good drainage is essential. Amend the soil with plenty of organic compost and moderate amounts of well composted manures including **Master Nursery Paydirt** (45% chicken manure), if desired. Be careful not to add excessive steer manure, which contains salts not leached out during composting. These salts will contribute to the already alkaline soil of some areas.

Gooseberries & currants respond extremely well to a well-balanced fertilizer applied at blossom time, and successively throughout the growing season. Granules easily broadcast include **Master Nursery Fruit Tree & Vine Food** and **Best All Purpose 16-16-16**. these products are formulated for time-release fertilization. Application of three to four times a year is usually sufficient. If a water soluble fertilizer is desired, **Master Nursery Bud & Bloom** works well if applied often enough, usually every two weeks from late April through early August. **Master Nursery Master Start**, a granular fertilizer, may also be used.

Because gooseberries & currants are shrubby and not trailing in nature, yearly pruning and excessive training is not required. Minor shaping of these bushes can be done directly following harvest. Vigorous pruning, although usually never required, is best accomplished when the plant is dormant. A plant free of leaves is more efficiently pruned for strength on its fruiting branches.

Although both gooseberries & currants will thrive in full sun, better fruit production will occur if these shrubs are afforded afternoon shade. This period of shade daily will allow for more succulent, thinner skinned fruit because vital moisture is not lost through the skin.

A special note: All varieties are not available at all times. These plants are shipped in the early spring when dormant. Successive shipment to replenish variety is often impossible therefore it may take several years before you acquire all the varieties you desire.

Currants

Red Lake Red Currant: Large, dark red berries on medium to large compact clusters. Excellent for jelly, preserves, and muffins. Strong & vigorous upright bush. Good for bird forage and windbreak plants. One of the most widely grown red currants. Ripens in July.

Consort Black Currant: Medium clusters of soft, black berries with a very prominent sweet flavor which is excellent for jams, jellies and juice, but also for drying. A fine choice for bird forage or as a windbreak plant. Ripens in July.

White Imperial: Loose clusters of white, translucent fruit with a pink blush. Richest and sweetest of all currants. Ripens mid-July.

Gooseberries

Captivator: This semi-thornless plant bears large tear-drop shaped fruit which is sweet, colored pink to red when fully ripe. Captivator is very cold hardy, mildew resistant, and ripens in late July.

Pixwell: Medium sized, oval shaped fruit is pale green in color becoming pink when fully ripe. Fruit is borne in clusters on long pedicels, making picking easier, hence the name. It has few thorns but are stout and aggressive. Pixwell is too tart for fresh eating, but makes wonderful pies, jams, and preserves. Very productive plant.

Poorman: These berries are green but turn pink when ripe. a table variety which can be eaten fresh—they are sweeter than most gooseberries. Considered to be the best American variety it is excellent for pies and jams.