

DID YOU KNOW...



THE GOOSEBERRY

Gooseberry is native to Europe, where it is particularly popular. The English love it in their kitchen. They have created a sweet and sour sauce that accompanies mackerel; This sauce would have given its name to the gooseberry in French, that could be literally translated to mackerel currant. The gooseberry grows on a thorny shrub with single large berries. Red currant bears clusters of smaller berries.

"Blackcurrant" (*Ribes nigrum*) is a black berry that comes from the blackcurrant bush, native to Northern Europe and looks like a blueberry. Its culture began in Europe in the middle of the 18th century. Its fruit is covered with a thin little translucent skin similar to that of the grapes. Their juicy, sour and aromatic pulp contains tiny seeds. The grape currant (*Ribes rubrum*, *Sanctorum*, *vulgar*, etc.), sometimes called "gadelle" in Quebec, originates in Northern Europe and Asia.

GOOSEBERRY'S SELECTION SITE PREPERATION

The site and choice of soil for the currants, black currant can be the same as for strawberry. Although they tolerate better heavier soils because they retain their moisture during the hottest periods. In the case of heavy soils, the mounding is always necessary. In light soil, carefully monitor the levels of boron and magnesium.

The Ribes are generally very hardy in our winters; we must watch the damage due to spring frost to the flowers, so choose sites that favor air circulation as is the case for the blueberry.



GOOSEBERRY'S PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE

Plant very early in spring, at a distance of 1.2-1.5 m on rows spaced 3 m apart. Place the plants deeper than they were in the nursery. Cut back the stems 1/3 of their height and keep only 2-3 stems. Irrigate and fertilize 2 weeks after planting with a full fertilizer or a fertilizer rich in nitrogen.

A 10 cm thick mulch will retain the moisture required for good seedling growth. Starting the second year, trim annually when still dormant. Old stems, diseased, misdirected or in overabundance are cut down to the ground. For the blackcurrant, keep up to 5 vigorous new stems each year. The wood of 2 and 3 years old will bear the most beautiful fruits. After 3 years, eliminate the old stems because their productivity decreases.

The currant and the red currant will yield more on older wood. So keep 3-4 new vigorous stems each year. After 5 years, the old, unproductive stems are eliminated. Spray foliage to control pathogens and pests as required. Blackcurrant is an alternative host for white pine blister rust. It is, therefore, necessary to avoid planting them if there are white pines in the neighborhoods.



GOOSEBERRY'S POLLINATION

Currants and red currants are self-fertile, on the other hand, the blackcurrant is not and therefore, needs a pollination variety. Bumblebees, like blueberries, will be your best pollination allies.

