



EDIBLE  
GARDENING  
SERIES

# Gooseberries & Currants

Not only do they have edible fruit that are excellent in jams, jellies, preserves and pies they are also attractive shrubs that fit well into the home landscape. Both the gooseberry and currants are self-fertile. Gooseberries generally have thorns and are hardy to -20°F. Currants have no thorns, and hardy to -40°F. 3 to 4 currant and /or gooseberry plants should produce enough fruit for the average family.

## EXPOSURE

Full sun to part shade.

## PLANTING

Space plants 4 to 5 feet apart, and 6 to 8 feet between rows. Amend existing soil with **Gardner & Bloome Organic Soil Building Compost** and **Dr. Earth Starter Fertilizer**. Water in well with **Bonide Root n Grow**. Remove blossoms in the first year to let their root systems get established first.

## FERTILIZING

Apply **Dr. Earth Fruit Tree Fertilizer** as buds start to swell, and again mid-May.

## PRUNING

Pruning needs to be done to maximize fruit production. Prune both gooseberries and currants in late winter or early spring before growth begins. With the exception of black currants, currants and gooseberries produce the majority of their fruit on 2- to 3-year-old shoots. Shoots (canes) 4 years and older produce very little fruit, and should be pruned out. After pruning, a healthy bush should have 9 to 12 main canes, or 3 to 4 each of 1-, 2- & 3-year old canes.

### After planting a yearly pruning schedule would look like this:

**Year 1:** At the end of year, remove all but 6 to 8 of the most vigorous canes (done when dormant). Making pruning cuts close to ground as possible.

**Year 2:** At the end of year leave 4 to 5 new 1-year-old canes, and keep 3 or 4 of the 2-year-old canes.

**Year 3:** Keep 3 to 4 canes each from 1-, 2-, & 3-year old growth.

**Year 4:** At the end of the 4th year, remove the oldest canes and keep 3 to 4 new 1-year-old canes.

Black currants produce best on 1-year-old wood. Strong 1-year-old shoot and 2- or 3-year-olds that have an abundance of strong 1-year old shoots are the most productive. So, when pruning keep a total of 10 to 12 canes (about half should be 1-year-old shoots).

## MULCHING

Apply 2 to 4 inches of **Soil Building Compost** around each plant to conserve moisture and control weeds.

## WATERING

Adequate water is needed from bloom time until end of harvest. Water to moisten soil to the depth of 6 to 8 inches.

## HARVESTING

A year after planting a light crop can be expected. By the 3rd or 4th year plants usually bear full crops. A yield of 4 to 6 quarts per bush is considered good for red and white currants and gooseberries. For black currants, you can expect half of that. Black currants ripen over a 2-week period and are picked individually. Red and white currants ripen over a 2-week period and are picked in clusters.

Once currants are mature they can hold on bush for about a week until rest of cluster is ripe. White currants are less attractive to birds. Gooseberries ripen in a 4- to 6-week period, and are picked individually – watch those thorns!

### CHECK LIST

- Currants and/or Gooseberries
- Soil Building Compost
- Dr. Earth Starter Fertilizer
- Bonide Root n Grow
- Mulch

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