



Caring For Currants & Gooseberries

Choosing a site:

Currants and Gooseberries grow best in morning sun and afternoon shade. The soil needs to be well drained and contain organic matter. It is ideal for the pH to range 5.5-7.0. Since currants and gooseberries are hosts to White Pine Blister Rust, it is not wise to plant a currant or gooseberry if you have five-needled pines in your landscape.

Planting:

Amend the soil with compost. Space the gooseberries and/or currants 4ft to 5ft apart in rows. Rows can be 7ft-10ft apart. Soak the roots in a bucket of Root Stimulator mixed with water for 15 to 20 minutes. Dig a hole large enough to fit the spread of roots. Add a well balanced slow release fertilizer, Espoma Bio-tone or Dr. Earth Bud & Bloom Booster to the fill soil. Press down on the soil around the plants to avoid air bubbles and water thoroughly with Root Stimulator mixed with water. At planting time, prune all branches to a length of 4"-6". This will stimulate new growth. Mulch around the plants before the summer arrives with 2" of compost, sawdust or other organic materials.

After Planting Care:

Remove all the blossoms the first year after planting. This will help the plant establish a vigorous root system. Fertilizer should be applied each February and again in the late spring each year. Use fertilizers high in phosphorous and potassium and low in nitrogen, like Dr. Earth Bud & Bloom Booster. Currants and gooseberries can also be trained as a fan shape on a trellis. This is attractive and will help with small spaces. Keep the plants well watered throughout the growing season.

Pruning:

Pruning is best done in the winter months when the plants are dormant. Red and White Currants and Gooseberries produce their fruit on 2-3 year old wood. Remove any stems that are older than 4 years old. Black Currants produce best on 1 year old wood. Strong 1 year old canes and 2-3 year old canes that have an abundance of strong 1 year old branches are the most productive. When you prune, keep a total of 10-12 canes per mature plant- about half should be 1 year old shoots. Make your pruning cuts close to the ground.

Harvest:

Harvest black currants and gooseberries as individual berries. If you try to do this with the red or white currants, you will ruin the fruit. So it is best to pick these in clusters.