

Welsh Fruit Stocks Red/White Currant Growing Guide



Red and white currants are of the genus *Ribes*. They grow in a similar way to a gooseberry bush, although they are not spiny, and produce very small berries on long strigs. Fruit is produced on both the young and the old wood. The fruit is great for making jelly, juice and wine.

We take cuttings from our own PHPS certified (Approved Health grade) mother stock in early spring and plant them out in our fields. We look after them through the summer while they are growing, and then lift and despatch them as one-year-old bushes from November until March/April (depending on the season).

Planting

Location and Soil

Red and white currants prefer a sunny position, but will also grow in partial shade. Try to choose a fairly sheltered location, and avoid frost pockets. They can be grown in a wide range of soils, acidic or alkaline, but may need a regular supply of water in light soils.

Preparation

Prepare the soil in advance of planting by digging in well-rotted compost to a spade's depth. You could also add in some fertiliser. Allow enough space for the bushes to be planted 4-5' (1.2-1.5m) apart.

Planting Method

Dig a hole big enough to accept the roots without bunching or curling, and ensure that the hole is deep enough to ensure the roots are covered. Firm in well to ensure that there is no air around the roots.

Fruiting and Cropping

Pruning and Care

Like gooseberry bushes, they will fruit on both their young and old wood. They can be pruned in the same way as a gooseberry bush. It is also possible to grow them like a blackcurrant bush, but the branches may need supporting when laden with fruit.

We recommend creating an upright bush (or a one or two-shooted cordon) by cutting away lower branches to create a clear leg. Initially after planting the remaining branches can be trimmed to half of their length, or to leave three to four buds on each branch. Try to make the last bud on the branch an outward-facing one.

Each winter trim the new (greener, less woody) shoots produced during the year to half of their growth, leaving any side shoots at about 2" (5cm) in length. This can also be repeated in the summer if growth is vigorous, leaving four to five leaves on each side shoot.

Pollination

Red and white currant bushes are self-pollinating, so only one bush is needed. Ensure insects can access your bushes at flowering time to aid pollination.

Fruit Protection

Birds will eat red and white currants, so try to keep them away from the ripened fruit with scarers, netting or a fruit cage. They also like the leaf buds in the spring, so keep an eye on them at that time.

Pests and Disease

Red and white currants can be susceptible to leaf spot, capsids, aphids and sawfly, but generally attract few problems.

Feeding and Watering

Water well during dry weather, and mulch with well-rotted compost in the winter/spring. A dressing of an organic fertiliser may also be beneficial.