

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing Gooseberries

Gooseberries are another option for an easy-to-grow fruit. They grow most anywhere in the United States, however the American gooseberries will grow slightly smaller than the European gooseberries. Depending on where they are grown and how, gooseberries taste similar to grapes, apples or strawberries. Their flavor profile can range from tart to tropical. Gooseberries are a perennial that can reach up to 60 inches high.

To plant:

Typically, gooseberries can be grown from cuttings. The American varieties are easier to propagate than the European ones. If growing from a cutting, take the hardwood cuttings in the fall. If leaves remain, that's fine, as it actually enhances the rooting process. Make the cuttings about a foot long. Plant gooseberry bushes 4 to 6 feet apart. Do not use the bushes as a continuous hedging, because they do not grow well when planted close to each other.

To grow:

Gooseberries thrive in cool, well-drained, fertile soil. They either grow on a permanent short leg, or they grow as a stool, which is when the gooseberry bush is continuously renewed with new shoots. Stool plants live longer, but bear smaller fruit. If growing on a short leg, begin pruning during the winter of its first season. Cut off all branches but three or four branches that point up or out. Then, trim those branches back by 6 inches. Do the same process the next winter, but leave six to 12 branches.

To grow the gooseberry as a stool plant, cut back the branches during its first winter to



[Pixwell Gooseberry plants available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

three or four strong branches. Do the same the following two winters, so the bush will have four one-year branches, four two-year branches and four three-year branches. In the fourth winter, cut away all four-year old shoots and all but four of the other shoots.

To harvest:

Gooseberries are commonly picked when they are full sized but underripe. This is because they are best to use in jams and pies when they are underripe, firm and bitter. Gooseberries don't continue to ripen after they are harvested, so if you want to eat them fresh, pick when ripe. Gooseberries vary in color, so the best way to tell if they are ripe is to squeeze them. If you squeeze them when ripe, the gooseberry will give a little.

What gooseberries crave:

Gooseberries do require nitrogen, but excessive nitrogen can cause disease such as mildew. Along with its slight need for nitrogen, gooseberries have a high need for



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potassium. If there is a potassium deficiency, the leaves will be scorched at the margins. Add a dressing of potassium annually with a half-ounce of actual potassium per square yard.

Where to buy gooseberry plants:

Urban Farmer's gooseberry plants produce tasty, big, green berries that ripen in July.

Check out our gooseberry selection on our website at ufseeds.com!



[Gooseberry plants available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



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