

## Grossulariaceae

### gooseberry family

Trees or shrubs, there are about 300 species worldwide. Typically, the alternate leaves are simple, although they may be deeply cleft. Inflorescence may be a raceme or corymb, or the flowers are solitary. Flowers are regular and perfect and may be perigynous or epigynous. Hypanthium is present. Calyx may be tubular, in which case it extends beyond the hypanthium and is showy. Fruits are berries in our species, containing many seeds. Cultivated species are sometimes naturalized, notably some of the currants.

### *Ribes* L.

Nearly 150 species comprise the gooseberries and currants, generally north-temperate in distribution and Andean. Ours are shrubs, with ovaries inferior, each with a pair of carpels. Calyx tube if present, is five-merous, the sepals showy. Petals are five-merous; stamens four. Leaves are palmately lobed and may be bristly.

#### Key to species

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| A. Stems spiny; flowers in clusters of 1–4.   | <i>Ribes hirtellum</i> |
| aa. Stems smooth or bristly, not spiny; flowers in drooping racemes.  | B                      |
| B. Stems, ovaries, fruits densely bristly.  | <i>R. lacustre</i>     |
| bb. Stems and fruit not bristly.  | C                      |
| C. Lower leaf surface without resin glands.   | D                      |
| D. Ovary and fruit with glandular hairs; plant with a foul odour when bruised; leaves with 5 lobes.                         | <i>R. glandulosum</i>  |
| dd. Ovary and fruit glabrous; plants without odour; leaves with 3 distinct lobes or 5 indistinct ones.                      | E                      |
| E. Weakly erect; flowers purple; pedicels with pale red glands; native plant.   | <i>R. triste</i>       |
| ee. Stout and stiffly erect; flowers greenish or golden; pedicels smooth or with a few glands, not red; introduced species. | <i>R. sativum</i>      |
| cc. Lower leaf surface with conspicuous, shining resin glands.  | F                      |
| F. Calyx densely pubescent; ovary and fruit with sessile glands; upper leaf surfaces not glandular.                         | <i>R. nigrum</i>       |
| ff. Calyx smooth or sparsely hirsute; ovary and fruit without glands; upper leaf surfaces glandular.                        | <i>R. americanum</i>   |

***Ribes americanum* Miller**

**American Black Currant; gadellier d'Amérique; gawaqtejg**



*Photo by Sean Blaney*

This erect shrub is neither bristly nor thorny. The flowers are carried in drooping racemes.

Look for this shrub on shady slopes and in bottomland thickets where soils are fertile.

Reported here from Truro and Windsor areas.

NS to AB, south to NM and VA.

***Ribes glandulosum* Grauer**

**Skunk Currant; gadellier glanduleux; gawaqtejg**



*Photo by Martin Thomas*

Smooth plants but for the red berries, which are glandular-bristly. The leaves present a distinct skunky odour when crushed or bruised. They are lobed, with five deltate lobes, irregularly dentate. Pedicels also bear stalked glands.

Flowers from mid-May to mid-June.

Rocky coniferous woods where canopy is opened. Also in alluvial soils and even sphagnous thickets.

Abundant throughout the province.

NL to AK, west to BC, south to MN and NC



*Photo by Martin Thomas*

***Ribes hirtellum* Michx.**

**Gooseberry; groseillier hérissé; gawaqtejj**



*Photo by Martin Thomas*

This species is diverse in pubescence and leaf shape. Typically, the leaves are deeply divided into five lobes and wedge-shaped at the base. They may be hirsute below.

Flowers in early June.

A plant of edges, forest, fields, meadows and pastures, occasionally in wetlands, as well as along fences.

Scattered throughout.

NF to AB, south to NE and VA.



*Photo by Martin Thomas*

***Ribes lacustre* (Pers.) Poir**

**Bristly Black Currant; gadellier lacustre; gawaqtejj**



*Photo by Sean Blaney*

A very bristly species, with stems and pedicels so armed; the petioles are glabrous. Leaves are lobed, the terminal lobe diamond-shaped and exceeding the length of the lateral lobes.

Flowers in June.

Prefers alkaline soils, in rocky or swampy forests, in ravines and streamsides, anywhere the soil is moist and fertile.

North from Annapolis Co. to Guysborough Co.

Ranges from NL to AK, south to CA, SD and VA.

***Ribes nigrum* L.****Black Currant;**

This erect shrub is mostly smooth, but the lobed leaves carry resin glands on their lower surfaces. Flowers are borne in drooping racemes. Sepals are purplish within. Ovary may also have glands on it, if so they are sessile. Fruit is black.

A cultivated shrub, sometimes persisting for a short time.

The collections in local herbaria are probably from cultivated plants.

This Eurasian native is known from NS to ON, south to IL and MD; west coast.

***Ribes rubrum* L.****(*R. sativum* Syme)****Red Currant; gadellier rouge**

An erect shrub with lobed leaves, bearing bristles on their undersurfaces. Pedicels of the racemes are glandular. It is a parent species for several cultivars or hybrids.

Flowers late May and June.

May be short-persistent on old garden sites.

Several sites recorded, but unclear whether the material is from cultivated shrubs.

European native, widely planted and naturalized from NS to MB, variously south to TN and NC, with several western states also included.

***Ribes triste* Pallas****Wild Red Currant; gadellier amer**

*Photo by David Mazerolle*

A sprawling reclining shrub, its leaves are trilobed and dentate. Although bristles are absent, it may be variously pubescent or glabrescent.

Flowers earlier, late April to July.

Frequents deep leaf mould in ravines, alluvial habitats and fertile forested sites.



*Photo by Sean Blaney*

Uncommon, local from northern Digby and Cumberland counties to northern Cape Breton.

Ranges from NF to AK, south to OR, IL and VA; eastern Asia.

***Ribes uva-crispa*** L., the European Gooseberry is to be expected here. It has naturalized from QC and ON south to TN and NC.