



What Is A Jostaberry: Growing And Caring For Jostaberries

(pronounced yust-a-berry)



A very vigorous spineless shrub, growing up to 1.8-2m tall and a similar size across, and is self fertile so only one need be grown. The fruits are larger than a blackcurrant and are dark reddish black in colour. These are more like a gooseberry when slightly unripe, but similar to a sweet-ish blackcurrant when fully ripe in late July, early August.

They require a location with well-drained, slightly acidic soil and a high organic content. It's a good idea to mix organic compost into the soil before planting.

For best jostaberry cultivation, space the bushes about 6 feet apart.

Growing Jostaberries

Spacing

Single Plants: 4' 11" (1.50m) each way (minimum)

Rows: 4' 11" (1.50m) with 4' 11" (1.50m) row gap (minimum).

Jostaberries can be grown as free standing shrubs, or trained against a wall.

They thrive in moisture retentive fertile soil in full sun, although they will tolerate shade for part of the day.

They should be planted at the same soil level as previously.

The planting hole should have some well rotted manure or compost dug into the bottom.

Mulch around plant to conserve moisture.

Bushes benefit from additional fertilizer early each Spring, and the mulch should be topped up.

During dry spells, they should be watered well, especially during the first year after planting.

Fruit is borne on wood that is one, two or more years old.

Every spring the bushes should be pruned to create an open framework of upright branches.

About half of the new growth each year should be removed, and any older, less productive branches or those growing at odd angles should be cut out cleanly just above ground level.

Harvesting, Eating & Storing Jostaberries

Jostaberries are easy to harvest, and can be picked individually to avoid damaging the fruits. Harvest when fruits turn blue-black and are firm. They freeze well and can be defrosted to use in the same way as fresh fruits.

Very ripe fruits are sweet enough to eat fresh with cream, or as part of a mixed fruit salad, where their dark colour provides contrast. Cooked, they can be used as pie filling, or for jam and jelly making.