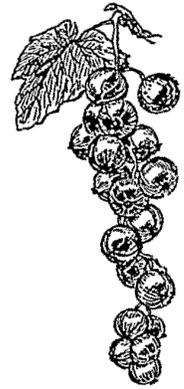


What are these plants?

These are currant bushes. The bushes will grow to be about as tall as your waist, and will grow small clusters of fruit that will be either red or black when ripe.

Currants are not a very popular fruit in the US, perhaps because Americans prefer their fruit to be sweet (rather than sweet *and* acidic, which is how currants taste). For those who like them, however, currants are nutritious (they have lots of vitamin C), and they are native to Wisconsin, so they are usually easy to grow here. They are much more commonly grown and eaten in Europe, where they are used to make juice, jam, jelly, and various desserts (their popularity in England is partly due to the fact that the government encouraged people to grow them during World War II as a source of vitamin C when importing oranges was impossible).



How were they planted? How are they being cared for?

Plants purchased from Jung's Nursery (Fitchburg, WI) were planted in small holes in April 2009. About 250 g (8 oz) of an organic fertilizer (bone and blood meal) was stirred into the soil around the base of each plant. The area around the plants was then covered with 15 cm (6 in) of leaves to help slow weed growth, and the plants were watered heavily. Plants were then watered (with a hose or by rain) weekly for a month.

The plants may produce flowers in 2009 and 2010, but will really be too small to support fruit. As a result, we will remove the flowers by hand. The plants will be allowed to produce fruit in 2011.

Who is taking care of them?

These plants were planted and are being cared for by an informal group of volunteers. The group includes people from around Madison who like fruit of all kinds and want to learn more about it. New people are always welcome! To get involved, e-mail the group at: ehcg.fruit@gmail.com

Why were they planted, and who will get the fruit?

Many people — even gardeners who grow their own vegetables — are unfamiliar with growing fruit and may think that they cannot do so themselves. These plants were planted here to show you that ordinary people can indeed grow fruit, and this sign is intended to tell you a little about how it was done. If you want to plant some in your own plot, please go ahead!

Because the Garden Committee felt that these plants would serve an educational purpose, the plants and the supplies used to take care of them are being purchased with money from gardeners' plot fees. As a result, the fruit belongs to all gardeners. We do ask that you:

- a) not harvest any fruit before it's ripe (these currants will be either red or black when ripe)
- b) take only a small amount of fruit (a few currants) so that others may enjoy the same experience
- c) be careful with the plants if you touch them
- d) think about joining the fruit group to help take care of the plants! (see above)