

Blackcurrants Are So Hot Right Now



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By [Danica Lo](#) Posted September 15, 2016

These delicious little berries were illegal to farm in the United States from 1911 to 2003.

Browsing the refrigerated section at my local Whole Foods early this morning, I came across a 750 ml jug of Connecticut-produced blackcurrant juice just sitting there all #casual. Growing up in England, blackcurrant products—jam, candy, juice—were ubiquitous, and Ribena was probably even more popular in early-80s household kitchens than orange juice. The berry is *so* common, it's even—wait for it—the flavor of purple Skittles in the UK and Australia, *not* grape. Meanwhile, here in the United States, blackcurrant farming was banned from 1911 to 2003—which means that most Americans have never heard of, seen, or tasted blackcurrant.

Well. That's all about to change.

According to a recent report in *Atlas Obscura*, blackcurrant farming is on the up-and-up in this country—and a comeback is "well underway." Recently, growers such as Blue Fruit Farm have sold berries to distilleries, breweries, ice creameries, and jam-makers. And CurrantC, a 10,000-bush-strong farm in upstate New York run by horticulturalist Greg Quinn who spent 20+ years teaching at the New York Botanical Gardens, has grown its direct-to-consumer business by leaps and bounds over the past 13 years—while also working with restaurants, such as Michelin-star Meadowsweet.

The berries' flavor, which is simultaneously rich, sweet, and tart, leaves plenty of opportunity for use—from traditional desserts, like this Jacques Pepin summer fruit soup which is poached in a blackcurrant liqueur broth, and the *Great British Bake Off*'s Paul Hollywood's black currant and liquorice Swiss roll, to gorgeous late-summer mocktails (this Jamie Oliver blackcurrant punch is made with lush coconut milk and refreshing mint leaves). Blackcurrant can even be made into a sauce—think: like cranberry sauce—to serve alongside poultry.

As for blackcurrants' nutritional value? Well, that's off the chart. Blackcurrants are a rich source of vitamin C and potassium, as well as containing a spectrum of B-vitamins (B1, B5, B6) and twice as many antioxidants per serving as blueberries.

If Whole Foods in New York City is any indication, you'll be seeing blackcurrants and its offshoot products in supermarket aisles near you in the very near future. In the meantime, if you can't wait to get your hands on the American produced versions of the sweet little berry, you can always order up some emergency Ribena concentrate on Amazon to tide you over.