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*Ribes americanum*

[Synonyms : *Coreosma americana*, *Coreosma florida*, *Ribes campanulatum*, *Ribes floridum*, *Ribes floridum* var. *grandiflorum*, *Ribes intermedium*, *Ribes nigrum* var. *pennsylvanicum*, *Ribes missouriense*, *Ribes recurvatum*]

**AMERICAN BLACK CURRANT** is a deciduous shrub. Native to eastern North America it has small yellowish-white flowers and leaves that turn yellow and crimson in Autumn. It is also known as American wild black currant, Black currant, *Chap-ta-haza* (Dakota North American Indian), Missouri gooseberry, *Pezi-nuga* (Omaha and Ponca North American Indian), and Wild black currant.

*Americanum* means ‘of or from America (North or South)’.

A few North American Indian tribes have enjoyed eating the fresh smooth glossy black fruit including the Meskwaki, Montana Indian and Chippewa. Some of the Dakota Indians viewed the berries more as famine food. Some of the Chippewa tribe used these fruit for preserves such as jams, and the Iroquois made them into sauces. Both the Iroquois and the Chippewa dried harvested fruit and stored them for future use, for example as hunting provisions or Winter food.

The shrub was also a source of medicine for several North American tribes including some of the Chippewa. Iroquois, Blackfoot and Omaha Indians used it to treat kidney problems, and the Blackfoot and Winnebago have used it for treating some female disorders as well. It was taken by the Iroquois to ease vomiting or back pain, and applied to skin problems too, and the Meskwaki tribe used the root bark for expelling intestinal worms.

The fruit (which are an acquired taste) are used today in preserves and pies.