

Ribes sanguineum

FLOWERING CURRANT is a deciduous shrub. Native to western North America it has small white-centred, pink to red (occasionally white) flowers.

It is also known as American currant, *Blutjohannisbeere* (German), *Blutrote Johannisbeere* (German), Flowering red currant, Ginger muck, Incense bush, *Meruzalka krvavá* (Czech), Pink flowering currant, Redflower currant, Red flowering currant, *Ribezl'a* (Slovak), *Rosenrips* (Swedish), *Ruusukerukka* (Finnish), and Winter currant.

The flowers are pollinated by humming birds but the subsequent fruit are not an attractive meal for birds.

Sanguineum is Latin (of blood, bloody) meaning 'bloody or blood-red' with reference to the flowers.

The bloomy bluish-black berries were popular with many North American Indian tribes including some of the Skagit, the Quileute, Thompson, Hoh, Paiute and Klallam. Children particularly from the Squaxin and Chehalis tribes seem to have enjoyed them, and some of the Salish Indians, the Hoh tribe and the Quileute all gathered and stored them for future use especially as Winter food.

Flowering currant is familiar in Europe and North America as an ornamental garden plant. It was first discovered in 1793 by Archibald Menzies (1754-1842) who was surgeon and naturalist on George Vancouver's expedition in HMS Discovery in 1790-1795. However it was not until 1825 that seeds were introduced to Britain (collected by the famous Scottish botanist, David Douglas (1798-1834)) and it first flowered in its new home in 1828.