A Definitive Guide To The Health Benefits Of The Blackcurrant
The Blackcurrant Foundation was established by British growers to raise awareness of the numerous health benefits of blackcurrants.

The Foundation is made up of around 50 growers across the UK, who grow between 10,000 and 14,000 tonnes of the fruit every year during the harvest season in July – August.
Blackcurrants: The Juicy Facts

Blackcurrants – the ultimate super-fruit

Despite their size, blackcurrants are packed with antioxidants including anthocyanins and vitamin C. New research has found that they can fight against a whole host of ailments including:

New studies suggest that blackcurrant juice can play an important role in slowing the cognitive decline associated with ageing and disorders including dementia.¹

A sample of 36 healthy young participants (aged 18 to 35 years) were given blackcurrant juice which was found to boost the ability to undertake tasks requiring alertness, vigilance and sustained attention. What’s more, mental fatigue was found to be reduced in those consuming blackcurrant juices, further proving that blackcurrants help you to get into the zone.

Blackcurrants are key to a healthy gut

Consuming fruits rich in polyphenols (in particular anthocyanins found in blackcurrants), can help to reduce gut inflammation and may help to increase the levels of good bacteria, Bifidobacterium, in the gut.²

A glass of blackcurrant juice can reduce metabolic syndrome

Metabolic syndrome is the medical term for a combination of diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. It puts you at greater risk of heart disease, stroke and other conditions affecting blood vessels but studies have shown that consuming blackcurrant juice can help reduce these symptoms.³

Blackcurrants could dramatically reduce the risk of erectile dysfunction

Research⁴ published earlier this year has revealed that men who look after themselves, take physical activity and enjoy a diet rich in flavonoids (naturally occurring compounds found in fruit & vegetables such as blackcurrants), are less likely to suffer erectile dysfunction.

The study, led by Professor Aedin Cassidy (University of East Anglia), assessed flavonoid intake in 25,000 men over a 10 year period. Of the six main commonly consumed flavonoids that were examined, three were found to be beneficial; anthocyanins, flavanones and flavones – and men who regularly consumed foods high in these flavonoids were 10 per cent less likely to suffer erectile dysfunction. Blackcurrants contain the highest level of anthocyanins compared to blueberries, red wine, apples and citrus fruits.

Anti-cancerous properties

Anthocyanins, the compounds which give blackcurrants their characteristic colour, have been found to be effective at preventing tumour cell numbers and increasing cancer cell death.⁵

Further research into the effects of blackcurrant extract has also revealed that it can help to decrease the size of gastric and oesophagus cancers.⁶

Blackcurrant provides simple solution to cardiovascular disease

New research⁷ undertaken revealed that those with habitually low intakes of fruit and vegetables could benefit simply by consuming blackcurrant juice high in vitamin C and polyphenols to improve their vascular health.

Blackcurrant juice contains berry fruit polyphenols, micronutrients renowned for playing an important role in reducing the progression of neurodegenerative and cardiovascular diseases.

Postmenopausal bone loss may be reduced by intake of blackcurrants

Research to evaluate the effect of blackcurrant anthocyanins on bone mass has revealed that blackcurrant supplementation can help to reduce the impact of menopause on bone density.⁸
The Latin name for Blackcurrant is Ribes Nigrum – hence the name of Ribena.

There are many varieties of British blackcurrant, all named after Scottish mountains. They include Ben Gairn, Ben Dorain, Ben Lomond, Ben Alder, Ben Tirran, Ben Hope and Ben Starav. Having multiple varieties helps to spread the harvesting season but also helps growers to meet agronomic criteria. Some varieties are bred for their distinct flavour and other varieties were introduced to be resistant to common pests.

Blackcurrants contain more vitamin C than any other natural food source - containing almost four times as much as an orange.

The darker the blackcurrant, the more anthocyanins it contains and the better it is for you. Varieties grown and bred in British are particularly rich and dark in colour, so are packed with antioxidants.

If you were to line up all of the land used by members of the Blackcurrant Foundations to grow blackcurrants (2000 acres), you’d have enough to fill 11,000 football pitches!

Blackcurrants are predominantly grown in Kent, East Anglia and the West Midlands, although there are fields all across the UK, including a breeding programme up in Dundee, Scotland.

Around ten to fourteen billion blackcurrants are cultivated every year in Britain - enough to give every person on Earth two British blackcurrants each.

It takes three years from planting a cutting until the blackcurrant crop is ready for harvesting.

The blackcurrant harvest season is between July - August although blackcurrants are available year round in supermarket, found commonly in the freezer aisle.

Blackcurrants have been grown in Britain for over 500 years.

### References


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www.blackcurrantfoundation.co.uk