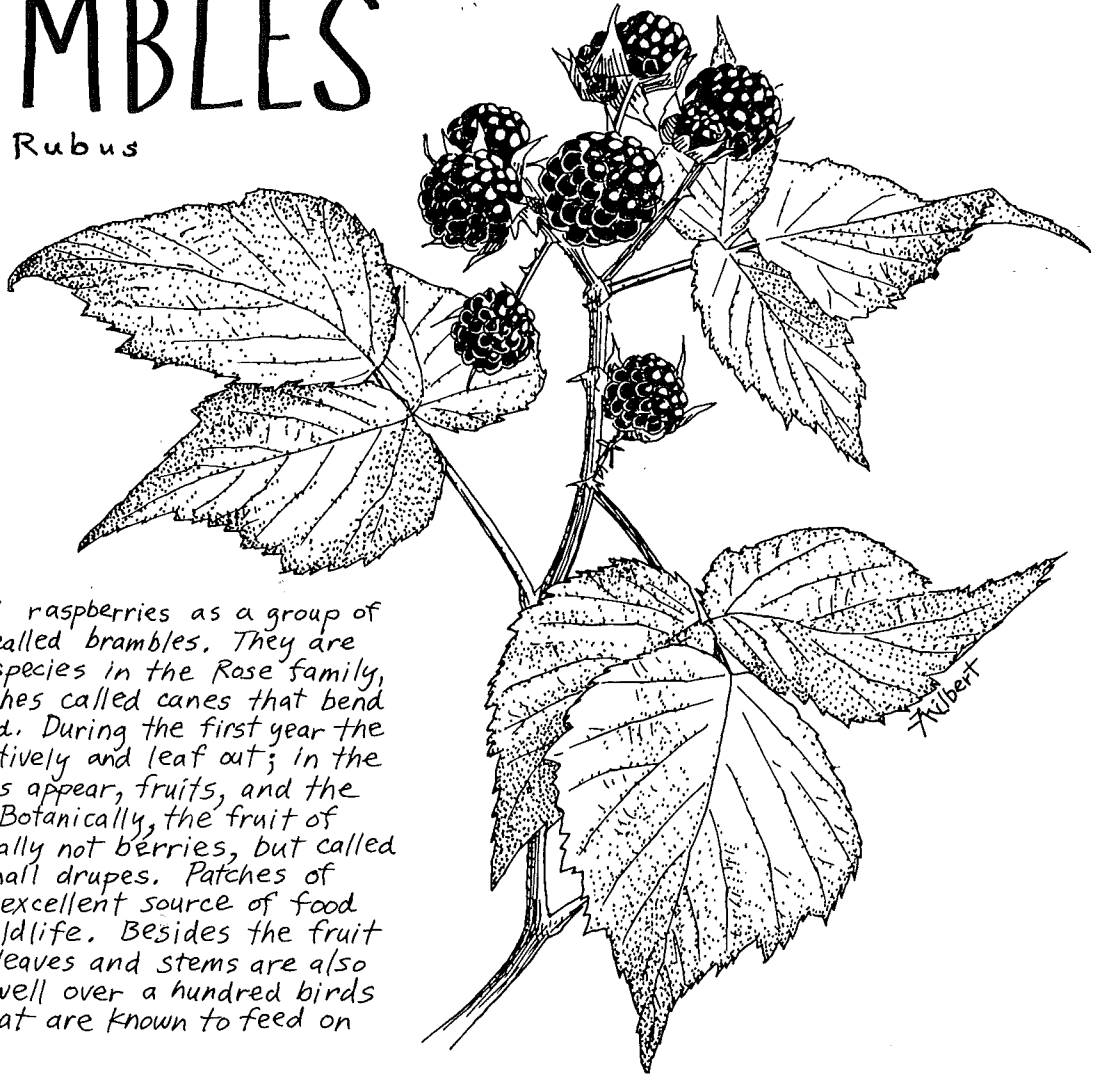


River Bend Naturalists Notebook

Presented by: RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER, Faribault, MN 55021

BRAMBLES

Rubus



Blackberries and raspberries as a group of shrubs are often called brambles. They are closely related to species in the Rose family, with thorny branches called canes that bend toward the ground. During the first year the canes grow vegetatively and leaf out; in the second year flowers appear, fruits, and the cane then dies. Botanically, the fruit of brambles are actually not berries, but called aggregations of small drupes. Patches of brambles are an excellent source of food and shelter for wildlife. Besides the fruit being eaten, the leaves and stems are also grazed on, with well over a hundred birds and mammals that are known to feed on these shrubs.

Raspberries, including Black Raspberries, have fruit that are round and when picked the white, thimble-shaped center of the fruit remains on the plant, giving the picked fruit the appearance of small cups. The fruit of the raspberries will fall to the ground once they are ripe. (Blackberry fruit will often dry on the plant.) The leaves of the raspberries are white beneath, covered with densely matted hair.

Blackberries may be identified by their fruits which are elongated and the white center stays in the fruit when picked. Because they remain attached to their receptacles they are harder to pluck off. The leaves are green beneath.

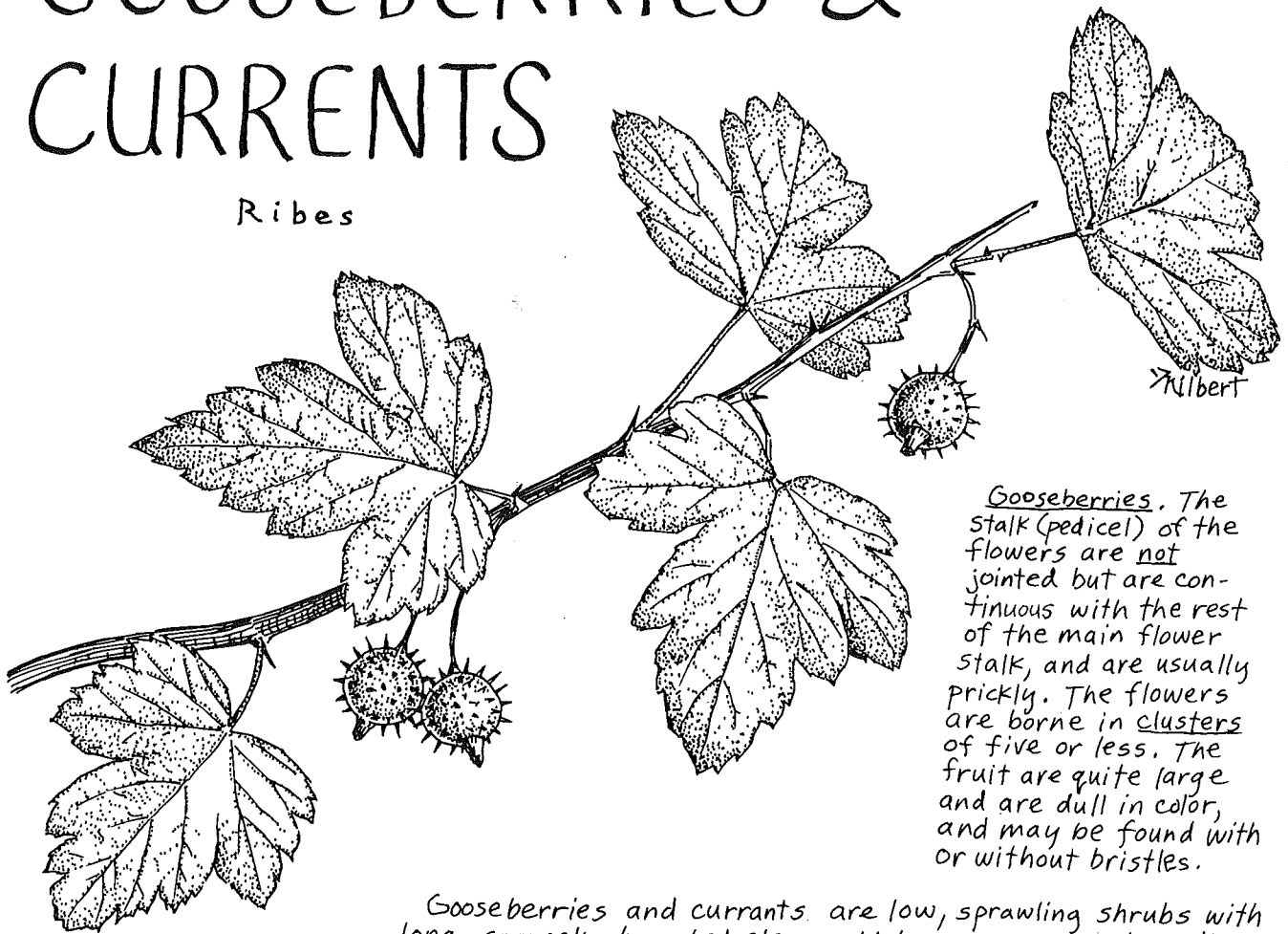
- text by Orwin A. Rustad

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GOOSEBERRIES & CURRENTS

Ribes



Currants. The stalk (pedicel) of the flowers are jointed and usually are not prickly. The flowers are borne in clusters of five or more. The fruit are quite small, dark-colored and gracefully arranged along a central stem (raceme).

Gooseberries. The stalk (pedicel) of the flowers are not jointed but are continuous with the rest of the main flower stalk, and are usually prickly. The flowers are borne in clusters of five or less. The fruit are quite large and are dull in color, and may be found with or without bristles.

Gooseberries and currants are low, sprawling shrubs with long, sparsely branched stems which are common along the edges of woodlands. The arching stems are much like those of brambles producing thickets that serve as excellent cover for many wildlife species. The fruit of both species of shrubs are also a valuable source of food for many species of birds, mice and voles. The small, rather inconspicuous 5-petaled flowers begin to bloom in early Spring, some light yellow and green and others white or tinted with pink. Pollination is mainly by honey bees and bumble bees. The maple-like shaped leaves are usually 3-5 lobed and are coarsely lobed.

- text by Orwin A. Rustad