

*Ribes* L. CURRANT, GOOSEBERRY

***Ribes aureum*** Pursh var. ***gracillimum*** (Cov. & Britt.) Jepson, GOLDEN CURRANT. Shrub, in range ± evergreen, not spinescent, with spreading, long branches and short lateral shoots, in range 100–200 cm tall; shoots lacking both nodal spines and internodal prickles and bristles, essentially glabrous. **Stems:** cylindrical, sometimes inconspicuously glandular-puberulent; periderm light grayish brown becoming darker on older stems, on twigs peeling in very small, translucent strips; leaf scars narrowly sickle-shaped. **Leaves:** helically alternate, palmately 3(5)-lobed, petiolate, with or without stipules; stipules if present 2, vestigial, = wings at base of petiole, ± 1.5 mm long, with 2 narrow, white, hirsute lobes at tip, glandular-hairy on margins; petiole crescent-shaped at base and cylindrical above, 5–34 mm long, at base with a fine constriction above leaf base (abscission zone), puberulent on the basal 3 mm of upper side and occasionally with 1–4 long, widely spaced glandular hairs along 2 edges of lower petiole; blade broadly obovate or roundish to broadly ovate or kidney-shaped, 13–75 × 10–90 mm, thin, conspicuously lobed, the lobes broad, rounded, broadly tapered to subcordate or truncate at base, entire or crenate to serrate above midpoint, palmately 3- or 5-veined with principal veins slightly raised on lower surface, with short-stalked, ephemeral glandular hairs along principal veins, the heads pale yellow heads when immature, upper surface darker and lustrous green. **Inflorescence:** leafy raceme, 30–55 mm long, arising at tip of lateral shoot from dormant bud, in range 5–10-flowered, bracteate; lower inflorescence with deciduous bracts (bud scales); bractlet subtending pedicel sheathing, sessile, spreading or recurved, narrowly to broadly ovate but lower bractlets sometimes obovate, 4–11 mm long, green, entire, upper surface with ephemeral glandular hairs, persistent; pedicel 3–5 mm long increasing slightly in fruit; bracteoles along pedicel typically absent, if present minute. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 8 mm across; hypanthium tubular with narrower base, 9–11 mm long, yellow, outer surface sometimes with inconspicuous glandular hairs below sepals, the inner surface green and nectar-producing; **sepals** 5(–6), spreading (making flower appear funnel-shaped), ovate to oblong, 3–4 × 2–3 mm, yellow with some glandular hairs especially at base, rounded to notched at tip; **petals** 5(–6), erect, spatulate-obovate or rhombic, 2–2.5 mm long, yellow aging red-orange, short-serrate to jagged on margins above midpoint; **stamens** 5(–6), free, arising from hypanthium rim alternate with petals; filaments flattened and tapered, ± 1 mm long; anthers erect, basifixed, dithecal, ovoid and compressed top-to-bottom, 1.5–2 mm long, pale yellow, lobed at base and with nipplelike tips, longitudinally and inwardly dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, conic-ovoid, 1.5–2 mm long, green, glabrous, 1-chambered with many ovules; style often exerted ca. 1 mm above level of erect petals, straight-cylindrical, ± 12 mm long, yellow, undivided and yellowish green at tip, glabrous; stigmas 2, ± appressed, club-shaped, ca. 0.5 mm long, green, sticky. **Fruit:** berry, many-seeded, somewhat flattened spheroid (oblate), in range 8.2–9.4 × 9–9.7 mm, typically glossy dark purple-red to ruby red or dark reddish orange, 10-stripped, glabrous; pulp somewhat juicy, yellow ochre to greenish apricot; with persistent bractlet and withered hypanthium. **Seed:** narrowly to broadly ellipsoid, 2.5–3.1 × 1.5–2.2 mm, flattened on 1 face and convex on other faces or with 3 or 4 convex faces and angles, yellow-green when removed from fresh pulp aging orangish; seed coat ± fleshy and sticky, transparent. Mid-January–early April.

Native. Known mostly from the Hollywood Hills, including a large population in Griffith Park, but also in Malibu Creek State Park near Malibou Lake growing in shade or partial sun in southern oak woodland, but observed as isolated plants elsewhere in range. Golden currant is a spineless species with mitten-shaped, lobed leaves, and is the only Californian species of *Ribes* that has yellow flowers. At least in the large population in Griffith Park, the yellow flowers are visited by hummingbirds.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson