

Cloudberries – deliciousness in the land of mosquitoes

Never does the Lapland bog feel more wastefully lavish than when it is full of ripe, fire-yellow cloudberries. Every year, the white-flowering marshes raise hopes for a good fruiting year. The cloudberry supply is always this summer's topic of conversation. But the berry is a whimsical treat. One summer, the bog glows with berries; the next year, there may be nothing.

Males and females

Each cloudberry flower is either a male or female flower. A plant always has only one type of flower. Since several hundred sticklings on the bog sometimes belong to a single plant, an entire small bog may have only one variety. Then there will be no berries. On bogs with a mixture of male and female plants, fertilization is possible if there are plenty of insects.

Landing by mistake

Above all, flower flies and bumblebees are delighted with the nectar of the male flower. When they eat, they get pollen from the yellow stamens. The female flowers lack nectar, but the insects often dive down by mistake and search for it. Then the pollen from the bumblebee lands on the green pistils of the female flower, fertilization takes place, and the berry begins to grow.

Frost

Frost is the flower's most dangerous enemy. Near the mountains, they flower at the end of May, when the risk of frost is still great. Even unripe cloudberries freeze at a few degrees below zero. Torrential rain, voles, and pests are other dangers.

Difficult to "farm" berries

Setting fruit takes a lot of effort. In the summer after a berry, many female plants cannot bear to flower. But the marsh can glow white with male flowers. In Norway, where cloudberry picking is not part of the *allemanrätt*/public law, landowners are trying to fertilize bogs. It has sometimes greatly increased berry production.

Successful attempts have been made to exhibit bee hives on bogs. Fertilization takes place more safely than if only wild insects are allowed to take care of the pollination.

The freezer box preserves the vitamins

In the past, when you had neither a freezer box nor the money to buy sugar, you ate the gooseberries fresh, as long as they were available. Maybe you saved a small amount in a barrel immersed in a cold spring. Today, the staghorn is stored in freezers. In good gooseberry years, you can make a lot of money picking and selling gooseberries.