

# A 'CURRANT' THREAT

Nate and his parents spent winter break with his older sister, Karen, at her new home near Salt Lake City, Utah. They spent a bunch of time on the slopes and the snow was awesome!



Several months later they are getting ready for another visit...

Nate's mom suggests that he dig up a few small black currant bushes from the backyard and bring them to Karen for her garden.

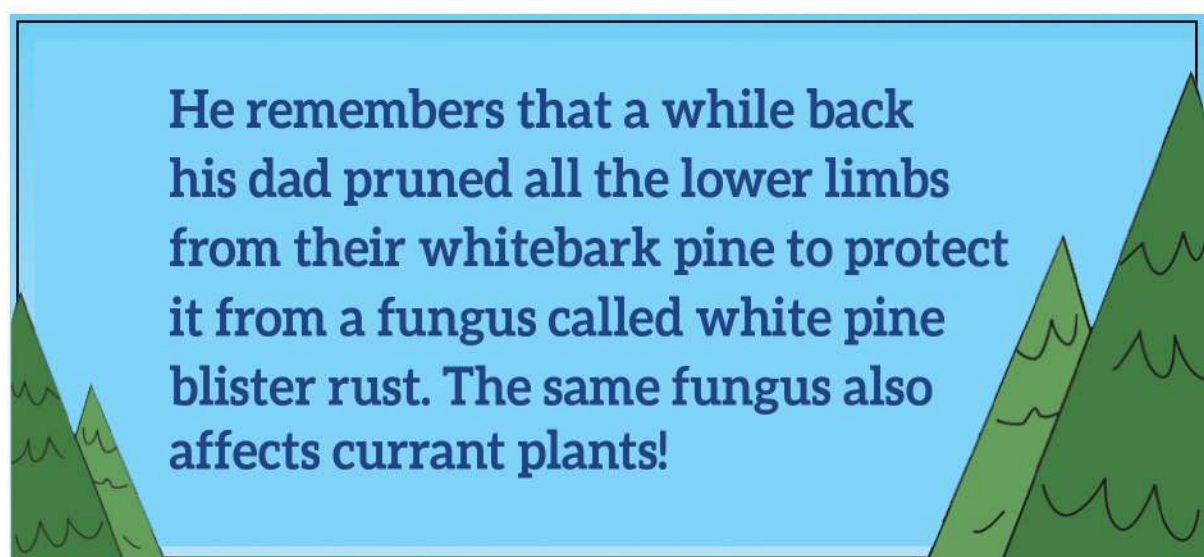
She does love baking with them!



When Nate starts digging up the currant plants the next day, he notices that many leaves are covered in orange fungal spots.



He remembers that a while back his dad pruned all the lower limbs from their whitebark pine to protect it from a fungus called white pine blister rust. The same fungus also affects currant plants!



## HANG ON!!

What was the funny name of those pines I didn't recognize at Karen's last winter... limber pine? Is that some kind of white pine?

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He looks it up on his phone and learns that all white pines have needles in bundles of five and that limber pine is in that group.

Nate texts his sister:



The pictures arrive and Nate was right ...

**FIVE NEEDLES!!**

"MOM! If we bring these plants, we might infect her pines with a deadly disease! Maybe we should find something else for her while we're there."

They wait, and, sure enough, they find a native plant nursery in Salt Lake City that specializes in edibles. The owner explains that white pine blister rust hasn't been found in Utah yet, and they hope it never is.



He helps them pick out some chokecherry and elderberry bushes for Karen's place and even sends them home with some samples of their fruit.



They put the plants in the ground that afternoon and then do some celebrating in the kitchen. Maybe it's knowing that they weren't the ones to introduce white pine blister rust to Utah, but everyone agrees, Karen's scones taste extra sweet today!

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