

Elderberry

**DID YOU KNOW?
ELDERBERRY HAS BEEN
KNOWN FOR CENTURIES AS
THE "PEOPLE'S MEDICINE
CHEST"**

WHAT IS ELDERBERRY?

Elderberries are small dark berries grown primarily for medicinal purposes. They are a great source of vitamins C & A and are rich in both potassium and iron. Not only have they proven to be antiviral, but tea made from dried leaves is used to treat both colds and flu. Wine, jams, jellies, baked goods, and much more have been made from elderberries, and it is growing increasingly popular in the kitchen as well as the medicine cabinet! Because of its deeply intense blue-purple color, some have used it as a natural dye.

PLANTING

Elderberry grows in areas with full sun and neutral to acidic soil. They will grow in USDA zones 3-9. and require little to no maintenance once established.

Plant elderberries in full sun for the best fruit production, although they tolerate light shade. They prefer fertile, well-drained soil and should be spaced 6–10 feet apart. Planting two or more varieties nearby improves pollination and berry yields. Spring and fall are the best times to plant.



MAINTENANCE

Elderberries are relatively low-maintenance once established. Keep the soil consistently moist, especially during the first year. Add compost or a balanced fertilizer each spring and apply mulch around the base to conserve moisture and suppress weeds. During winter, prune out dead, damaged, or older canes to encourage vigorous new growth and better fruit production. Remove older canes after 3–4 years to encourage vigorous new growth.

HARVESTING

Most elderberry plants begin producing fruit within 2–3 years of planting. Covering your plants with bird netting during the fruiting season is helpful in protecting the fruit. Harvest berries when entire clusters turn deep purple-black and are fully ripe. Cut whole clusters from the plant and remove the berries from the stems before processing. Berries can be dried, frozen or cooked immediately. Harvested berries will only last a few days in the fridge, but, can be stored in the freezer for up to six to eight months.

POPULAR VARIETIES OF ELDERBERRY

Adams – A reliable heirloom variety known for heavy crops of large berry clusters. It grows 6–10 feet tall and is excellent for syrups, jams, and wine.

Johns – Produces large berries and is often paired with Adams for improved pollination and higher yields. Vigorous and productive, reaching 8–10 feet tall.

Wyldeewood – A highly productive variety developed in Oklahoma. It produces large clusters that ripen uniformly, making harvesting easier. Excellent for home and commercial growers.

Ranch – A compact variety growing 5–6 feet tall, making it ideal for smaller spaces. It ripens earlier than many elderberries and performs well in cooler climates.

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