

### **Elderberry** AKA American Elder (*Sambucus Canadensis*)

Elderberry is a large shrub found in wet areas. It bears panicles of white flowers, followed by collections of tiny black berries. Elderberries supply large amounts of potassium and beta carotene, and also contain calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin C. European and Native American folklore ascribed a number of magical and medicinal properties to the Elder.

Both the flowers and the berries are edible, but should be cooked or dried before being consumed. To harvest them, pick the whole panicle, rather than trying to separate individual flowers or fruits in the field. The flowers can be battered and fried, made into wine, used for tea, or a flavoring for vinegar. The berries are best used in jam (requiring the addition of sugar and pectin, or dried and added to baked goods).

Though naturally found in wetlands, elderberries can be grown in upland sites. They may appreciate irrigation during droughts. They grow in sunny areas, but probably appreciate a bit of shade, especially in upland areas. Being a weedy native plant it should not need fertilizing, or control of insects or disease.

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