

ELDERBERRY

Latin: *Sambucus nigra*

Common name: American Black Elderberry, Elderflower, Elderberry

In Penobscot: séskipe

MAJOR USES:

- Juice
- Jam
- Pies
- Sauce
- Wines
- Immune support
- Cold and flu relief
- Acne, age spot, & wrinkle treatment
- Rheumatism and fever treatment
- Burn relief
- Indigenous instruments
- Natural dyes
- Basket weaving
- Teas

American Black Elderberry is a flowering shrub that can be found in moist yet well drained soil that can be very dry, as well as edges of banks and areas with disturbed soils. It can grow in full sun or partial shade. Elderberries species can be found around the world in parts of *Europe, Asia, Africa, as well as North and South America.*



STRUCTURE & ROOT SYSTEM

Black Elderberry is a suckering plant: it sends out new shoots each season but has a significant number of branches that die back every year. This plant's ability to send out new shoots from the main root is quite impressive. If conditions are right, elderberry growth can sustain allowing it to become a small tree as opposed to a shrub.



LEAVES

Leaves can reach up to a foot long and are pinnately compound, meaning the leaf is composed of 5 to 11 leaflets. The leaflets have razor-toothed edges that can reach 2 to 4 inches long and are arranged opposite along the leafstalk.



BARK

This shrub can grow up to 13 feet tall. The bark is light grey and smooth when immature but becomes coarse with a darker grey bark. Older stems can be hollowed out whereas the younger stems have large white piths in the center.



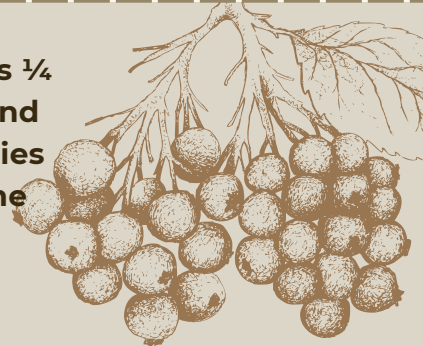
FLOWERS

The white flowers are very floral smelling. The flowers are in clusters that lay flat and span across 10 inches. There are about five clusters of petals on each stalk. The tiny individual flowers have 5 petals and are no wider than 1/4 inch wide.

Many flowers in the wild can look like this, it is important to note the other characteristics when identifying, as some can be very toxic if not properly identified. Elderberry flowers appear in spring-fall. The flowers are edible, but it is important to let them be if you desire the fruit more.

The fruit of elderberries is 1/4 inch large, dark, round, and glossy. These purple berries hang in clusters where the flowers once were, these are known as drupes.

Berries are considered toxic if eaten raw but edible once cooked. Each berry has up to 5 large seeds. The fruits help with inflammation due to their antioxidants and vitamins, helping to clean and regulate the blood.



HARVESTING

Although there are many species of elderberries, only the purple and blue berries are edible. The ripe fruit is usually ready in the later summer months from late July to mid-September in northern climates. Elderberries have a sweet yet tart flavor, some have referred to them as tasting like earthier blueberries or blackberries.

STORAGE

Always cook berries before consuming.

Fresh: 1-2 days

Frozen: 6 - 10 months

Dehydrated: 1 year

DO NOT
Eat
RAW

Elderberries contain a toxin similar to cyanide and can cause upset stomachs

