

Ison's Nursery & Vineyard

Planting Instructions

ELDERBERRY PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS



Elderberry's have become extremely popular in the US and around the world for their amazing health benefits. They offer immune boosting properties and are often found in cough syrups. Elderberries are not difficult to grow.

Planting Elderberry Plants:

'John' and 'Adams' elderberry shrubs perform well in USDA hardiness zones 4 to 9

Elderberries grow best in a moist, fertile, well-drained soil with a pH between 5.5 and 6.5.

It is best to plant in the winter while the plants are dormant.

Plant in full sun. Plant 6 to 8' apart in rows that are 10' apart.

Plant them 2 inches deeper than grown at the nursery. Water after planting.

Remember that Elderberry plants are shallow rooted so keep the watered especially during dry periods.

Fertilizing:

Elderberries respond well to fertilization. You may also incorporate manure or compost before planting.

Fertilize annually in early spring. Apply 1/8 pound of ammonium nitrate (or .5 lbs. of 10-10-10) for each year of the plants age, up to 1 pound per plant (or up to 4 lbs. of 10-10-10)

Weed Control:

The most difficult problem faced with growing Elderberries is weed control. Since they have shallow roots, do not cultivate deeper than 2 inches. After the first year, it is best to avoid disturbing the soil at all because the slightest injury can damage the fibrous root system. It is better to pull weeds by hand while they are small or mowing and mulching to control weeds without disturbing the elderberry roots. Once they have developed a thick hedgerow of plants – elderberries can suppress weeds on their own very well.

Harvest:

You can expect to start harvesting elderberries in the second season.

Harvest elderberry fruit in late August through September, depending on the cultivar. When they are ripe, the entire cluster should be removed, and the berries stripped from the cluster for use. Use the fruit as soon as possible or store at a cool temperature for later use.

** It is advised to cook the berries rather than eating them raw. Avoid the temptation to sample berries straight from the tree.

** Uncooked berries have a dark purple juice and are astringent and [are not edible!](#)

** Never harvest elderberry fruits that are not completely ripened. (The immature fruit can cause nausea in some cases.)

The easiest way to harvest elderberries is to use scissors to snip the entire cluster from the shrub and then remove the berries from the cluster. The annual average yield per plant is 12-15 pounds.

You can make delicious elderberry jams, wines, and pies to an effective and natural way to fight the flu, the elderberry is a greatly beneficial plant. Refrigerate immediately after harvesting or freeze for later use.

Pruning:

Elderberries send up many new canes each year. During the first two seasons, elderberry plants should be encouraged to grow vigorously with little to no pruning required. After the second year, pruning should be done annually in early spring. All dead, broken and weak canes should be removed. Three-year-old canes should be removed, as they produce less fruit and appear to be more prone to winter injury. Removal of older canes will encourage the growth of new, more fruitful canes.

Watering:

Elderberry plants need approximately 1 inch of water each week, from bloom time to the end of harvest. If you are not getting enough rainfall, plants should be irrigated for optimum plant growth and fruit production. Also, if you are having prolonged dry periods after harvest, keep your plants well-watered.

