American Elder

Sambucus canadensis



American Elder flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 2b

Description:

A large, vigorous shrub with attractive clusters of small, white flowers in spring followed by purplish-black berries and thick, pithy stems, quite coarse in winter; very adaptable, survives with minimal care but tends to sucker

Ornamental Features

American Elder features showy clusters of lightly-scented creamy white flowers held atop the branches in early summer. It has dark green deciduous foliage. The compound leaves turn yellow in fall. The deep purple fruits are held in clusters in early fall.



American Elder fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

American Elder is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a high maintenance shrub that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

American Elder is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

American Elder will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America.



American Elder in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder