

Elderberry



Tree Type

This flowering shrub is deciduous and loses its foliage for the winter.

Planting

Plant Elderberry shrubs 6 to 8 ft apart if planting in a row. Refer to back for best planting practices for your bareroot.

Watering

Mulching is recommended to retain soil moisture. Once established, the Elderberry will be slightly drought resistant. Refer to watering guidelines on back for specific watering directions.

Pruning

Elderberry can be pruned into a multi-stemmed form or a single-stemmed small tree. Prune old branches (3 years old) as they are not able to produce as much fruit as usual. Remove suckers as they appear or they may take over.

Preferences

This shrub prefers full sun to partial shade meaning it needs a minimum of 4 hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day. Full sun yields more flowers and berries. Elderberry grows in acidic, loamy, moist, rich, sandy, silty loam, well-drained, wet and clay soils.

Attributes

Elderberry grows to a height of 5 to 12 ft with a spread of 5 to 12 ft at maturity. It grows at a fast rate with height increases more than 24 in per year. In the summer, the shrub blooms producing small, star shaped yellowish white flowers in clusters. In August-September, it yields edible dark purple berries good for jellies, pies, juice and wine. Raw elderberries can be toxic to humans, dogs and cats.

Wildlife Value

The edible berries provide food for dozens of bird species and other wildlife. The pollen heavy flowers attract a wide variety of bees, flies, beetles and moths. The berries are a favorite of many bird species. The shrub provides forage and cover for large and small mammals and nesting sites for birds.

When newly planted trees go without enough water, growth slows to a crawl. This delays establishment and may even lead to the death of leaves, branches, roots or the whole tree.

For the most part, trees can only take up water from soil that is in direct contact with roots. Even in the best conditions, newly transplanted trees use water from a relatively small volume of soil. To make matters worse, roots of bare root, balled & burlaped, and spaded trees are cut during transplanting.

Within two to three days after spring or summer planting, the soil around the roots of trees dries enough to impede root growth. Newly transplanted trees in the Midwest benefit from daily watering for the first one to two weeks. **Apply 1 to 1½ gallons of water for each inch of trunk diameter.** After that, **water trees every two to three days for the next two to three months and then weekly until established.** The more closely you match your watering frequency to the optimum, the quicker trees become established.

Reduce watering in cool, cloudy, or wet weather if the soil is poorly drained (soil drains less than 3/4 inches per hour). Eliminate daily irrigation in poorly drained soil.

After it rains, stop watering until the rainwater drains from the soil. Stop watering in the autumn once leaves fall from trees.

Mulch reduces evaporation and conserves water. An investment in frequent watering helps insure against tree death and the cost of replanting trees.

BEFORE PLANTING

Select the correct tree for your site.
Find help at mndnr.gov/treecare.

Before digging, contact Gopher State One Call at 800-252-1155 or gopherstateonecall.org to check for underground lines.

AFTER PLANTING

Mulching

Applying mulch, such as wood chips, around a tree has many benefits, including:

- Improving growing conditions
- Retaining moisture
- Controlling weeds and grasses
- Adding nutrients
- Insulating soil
- Protecting trunk and roots

Mulch that is applied too deeply and against the tree is harmful. This "mulch volcano" can rot the tree's trunk, lead to insect and disease problems, and deprive roots of oxygen. Use the "3-3-3 Rule" for applying mulch: 3 feet in diameter, 3 inches deep, and 3 inches away from the trunk.

Watering

Watering a tree is critical to its survival during the first three years. During any week in which less than 1 inch of rain falls, provide 15-25 gallons of water, until the ground freezes. After the first few years, continue to water trees during dry times. Tree water bags may make watering easier.

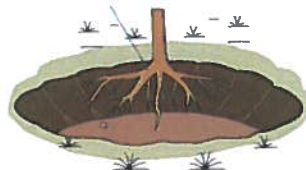
Protecting

A plastic or metal mesh tree guard can be installed around the tree's trunk to protect it from animal, mower, and trimmer injury. The tree guard must be removed or replaced as the tree grows.

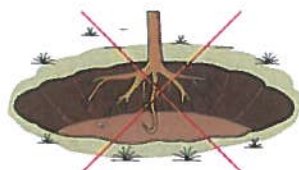


- 1 Keep roots moist at all times. Dry roots die.
- 2 Dig a hole twice as wide as and slightly deeper than root length.
- 3 Place roots in hole so top of first woody root is within 1 inch of soil surface.

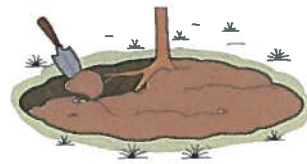
FIRST WOODY ROOT



- 4 Distribute roots evenly, making sure roots are straight and not doubled over or "J" rooted.



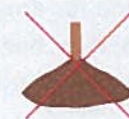
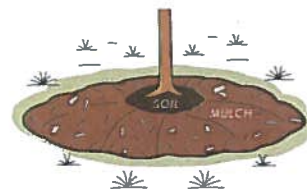
- 5 Keeping tree straight, backfill hole up to top of first woody root.



- 6 Heel in soil with foot over entire backfill area to remove air pockets from the soil.

- 7 Water entire backfill area.

- 8 Layer 3 inches of mulch over backfilled area, keeping mulch away from trunk.



DON'T CREATE A MULCH VOLCANO. IT CAN ROT YOUR TREE.