Red Elderberry

Sambucus pubens



Red Elderberry flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 12 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 2a

Other Names: American Red Elder, Sambucus racemosa var. pubens

Description:

A tough and vigorous garden shrub valued for its showy creamy white flowers in spring and bright red berries which are favorites of the birds; bushy upright habit, somewhat leggy and can be rather coarse in winter, however very adaptable

Ornamental Features

Red Elderberry features showy clusters of fragrant creamy white flowers held atop the branches in mid spring. The red fruits are held in abundance in spectacular clusters in early summer. It has dark green deciduous foliage. The compound leaves turn yellow in fall. The smooth tan bark and burgundy branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Red Elderberry 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 shrub will require occasional maintenance 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;

- Disease

Red Elderberry is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Red Elderberry will grow to be about 12 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 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. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. 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.