



[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)

## **JOHN'S CORNER:**

### **NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS**

*by John Ferguson*

Several times over the last few years I have reported on many new studies talking about the health benefits of Elderberries. Many nutritionists are calling Elderberries one of the super foods for good health.

My first exposure to elderberries was when I was about 7 years old. My father and I would walk over to White Oak bayou (before the Corp of Engineers ruined it) where elderberries grew along the shore line. He would take some thick stem cuttings and showed me how to remove the pithy core. Next, he would collect a pine branch and whittle it down to make a plunger that would just fit inside the hollow cane. I would stick a china berry inside and presto I had a pop gun that could shoot the berry almost 100 feet.

As I was older and in Boy Scouts working on a survival merit badge, I started learning about the culinary or food aspects of this plant, from the flowers to the berries. Later while in college I worked part time jobs for local farmers where they also fed me. I learned how delicious elderberry fritters (fried flower heads) could be.

NATURE'S WAY   
RESOURCES  
*an organically based service company*

[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)



**Photograph from Internet, source unknown**

---

101 Sherbrook Circle • Conroe, Texas 77385-7750  
(936) 321-6990 Metro • (936) 273-1200 Conroe • Fax (936) 273-1655



**American Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) Plant with Flower Clusters. Photo by Jim Baker.**

I experienced elderberry jelly and jam and on occasion elderberry wine that also tasted pretty durn good.



**Photograph from Internet, source unknown**

Ancient society knew about the benefits of elderberry, “the plant of God that heals everything it touches”, Hippocrates. Others have called it the medicine chest of the people.

American Indians would sometimes include dried elderberries in their pemmican to add nutrition and some sweetness.

Today I continue to learn about this amazing plant, from the beautiful flowers and delicious fruit to its ability to help stabilize shorelines and prevent erosion.

Elderberries make great screens and hedges and dampens the sound of unwanted noise. Many insects love the pollen including butterflies, bees and other pollinators. Many forms of wildlife love the fruit from birds to small mammals to even box turtles and snakes.

Modern researchers have found that some of the phytochemicals found in the fruit makes it harder for viruses and bacteria to reproduce. The berries (actually drupes for those whom want to picky) also contain health promoting chemicals called flavonoids, more than any other berry. It is also has the highest antioxidant properties of any of the berries. Additionally, they are higher in minerals and other nutrients than other berries.

In addition to wine, elderberries can be used to make meads and beer, cake and meat glazes, soups, tinctures, and syrups.

There are many cultivars available today of both native American and European species. However, the nutrient content is not as high and they are not as tough as the native wild varieties.

Elderberries are perennials that will grow in almost any soil with part to full sun. Native varieties do not care about pH and are very drought tolerant in our area once established. They are essentially disease and pest free or as Brenda might say “a perfect Lazy Gardener plant”.

A couple inches (2-4 inches) of leaf mold compost or good aged Native Mulch will make them very happy. They quickly respond to a good organic fertilizer and really like fish emulsion supplements. The Microlife family has very good products for both of these.

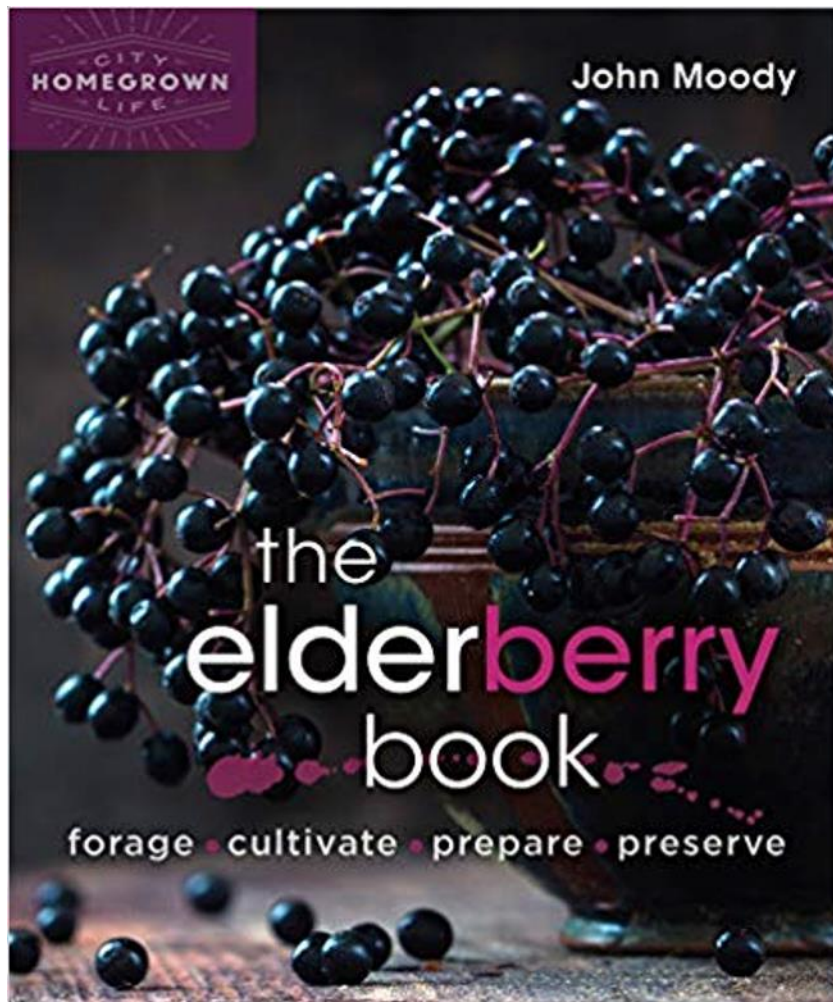
This is an excellent plant, extremely low maintenance, and great for habitat gardening. For those interested we have them growing wild on our facility if you want seeds or cuttings and we propagate a few for sale in our nursery.

NATURE'S WAY   
RESOURCES  
*an organically based service company*

[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)

For more information a good book is:

**“the elderberry book – forage, cultivate, prepare, preserve”**, by John Moody, New Society Publishers, 2019, ISBN: 978-0865719194



---

101 Sherbrook Circle • Conroe, Texas 77385-7750  
(936) 321-6990 Metro • (936) 273-1200 Conroe • Fax (936) 273-1655