

# Kalamazoo Valley Museum

[Common Elderberry, American Black Elderberry](#)

[\(Sambucus canadensis \)](#)



The Common Elderberry flower is a beautiful canopy of blossoms. This shrub can grow from 6.5 feet to 13 feet tall. The flowers form wide clusters, and the fruit is purple-black berries. The flowers are lemon scented. It attracts bees, wasps, and beetles, all of which are strongly drawn to the flowers. It also attracts butterflies. The fruit is eaten by many species of birds and animals. It is insect and disease resistant but can have mites, mold, and other similar problems. The flowers can be used to make wine. The fruit is used to make jams, preserves, and pies. The fruit **MUST BE COOKED** in order to be consumed safely!

Fun facts: Native Americans used Common Elderberry for medical purposes. The twigs were used to make whistles. The leaves and inner bark can be used for making dye and insecticides.

Why plant MI native plants? Native plants bring diversity to your yard, increase the diversity of insects, and therefore create a more diverse food chain. They help create a full “circle of life” for insects and hence birds and other animals in the food chain. Native plants use a minimal amount of water, require minimal maintenance, require no chemicals, provide beautiful landscapes, and build a natural wildlife habitat.