Elderberry Cultivar Research in Missouri

Andrew L. Thomas
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Southwest Research Center
Mt. Vernon, MO
Early Cultivar Research

- Mt. Vernon, Mountain Grove
- 1999 First significant plantings
- Collected 60 + selections
- 2003 First cultivar trial planted
- 2009 Lincoln University
New Elderberry Cultivars

- Wyldewood 2010
- Bob Gordon 2011
- Marge 2014
- Ozark
Elderberry Grants

- 2004. $15,000. USDA – NPGS
- 2004. $16,150. USDA – NWCSFR
- 2005. $17,765. USDA – NWCSFR
- 2005. $9,300. MU College of Agriculture
- 2010. $29,611. MDA Specialty Crops
- 2010. $105,427. SARE
- 2010. $7.7 million. NIH
- 2011. $25,000. USDA / AFRI (Symposium)
- 2011. $30,000. MDA Specialty Crops (Symposium)
- 2011. $5,000. Mizzou Advantage (Symposium)
- $$ MU Agroforestry Center
Brand New Paper!

Growing and Marketing Elderberries in Missouri

By Patrick L. Byers, Andreto L. Thomas, Mihaela M. Cernusca, Larry D. Godsey and Michael A. Gold; University of Missouri.

The American elderberry (Sambucus canadensis, also known as Sambucus nigra subsp. canadensis) is native to much of eastern and midwestern North America. The plant is a medium to large multiple-stemmed shrub, bush or small tree (Fig. 1). Elderberry is commonly found growing in a range of habitats throughout Missouri, but it prefers moist, well-drained, sunny sites and is often found along roadside ditches and streams. Elderberry is a beautiful plant with showy flat cymes of white flowers in June followed by bright purple to black berries in late summer (Figures 2 and 3). Ornamental forms are important landscape plants, and elderberry has been grown for generations as a backyard fruit. Based on identified market size and demand, opportunities exist to increase both the production and processing of elderberry across the value chain. At present, usage of both fruit and flowers for wine, juice, jelly, colorant and dietary supplement products is on the rise. European elderberry (Sambucus nigra) is grown as a commercial fruit crop in Europe and elsewhere. The American elderberry, however, appears to be a better candidate for commercial production in Missouri. This guide outlines production practices and market information for American elderberry based on research and growers’ experiences in Missouri.
International Elderberry Symposium

- June 9-14, 2013
- Columbia, MO
- International Society for Horticultural Science
- Numerous sponsors
- Scientists and farmers from 13 countries
- 205 attendees: Scientists, Processors, Farmers
- Acta Horticulturae