

# Elderberry Planting and Care Guide



## Planting

1. Choose the best site:
  - Sun: Full sun to partial shade. (As with many berry plants, the plant will likely be smaller and produce fewer blossoms in partial shade).
  - Soil: Any soil type (Plants in sandy soil will require more water.) Elderberries prefer consistently moist soil but established plants can tolerate some drought and occasional flooding. Elderberries can do well in wetter parts of your yard or property that other plants don't like.
  - Spacing: plant 5-6 ft apart. Elderberries spread out by sending up suckers that develop into canes, so they need room to grow
2. Dig a hole deep and wide enough to accommodate the roots. Plant only a few inches deeper than the soil in the pot. Mix some compost or other organic material into the soil as you backfill the hole and make sure all of the roots are covered by soil. Pack the soil down firmly.
3. Water immediately after planting.
4. Optional: to help maintain soil moisture mulch with 2-3 inches of wood chips, pine needles, etc.

## Care

1. Elderberry plants have shallow root systems, so water them regularly during the first growing season. The ground should be moist rather than waterlogged. Regular watering isn't as crucial once the plant is established but make sure to be watering any age elderberry plants during hot dry spells.
2. Birds love elderberries, so you may want to protect your plants with bird netting.
3. Pruning is needed to keep elderberry plants healthy and under control. Prune in late winter/early spring when plants are dormant. Pruning strategies vary. 3 methods mentioned in the UNH article below are 1) pruning old, dead and weak stems every year; 2) cutting all stems down by about  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; 3) Cutting all stems down to the ground every few years.

*Adapted from our own experience, Indiana Berry and Plant Co., Hartmanns Plant Company, and [University of New Hampshire Extension](#) "What is the best way to grow elderberries?"*