

Vintage Germplasm Common Elderberry

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces the release of a selected ecotype of common elderberry [*Sambucus nigra* L. ssp. *canadensis* (L.) R. Bolli] for the Great Lakes region. As a selected release, this plant will be referred to as Vintage germplasm common elderberry. It has been assigned the NRCS accession number 9084126. Another common name for this species is American black elder.

Description

Vintage germplasm common elderberry is a multi-stemmed, native perennial shrub that exhibited three year growth up to 88 inches tall and 137 inches wide. The thick, roughened and furrowed bark is yellowish-brown to brown. Twigs are stout, light brown to gray, covered with numerous small wart-like bumps (lenticels) and have white pith. Compound leaves are set oppositely in pairs in a feather-like arrangement. Leaflets are oval to lance-shaped and up to 6 inches long and 1 inch wide. Fragrant white flowers are arranged in flat-topped clusters measuring 4 – 10 inches across, and are arranged in branched clusters of five. Fruit ripens from late July to September.

Method of Selection

Thirty-one collections of common elderberry were assembled from five states. Dormant vegetative cuttings from each collection were planted in the greenhouse to establish plants for field testing. In 1998 plants from the greenhouse were placed in replicated field experiments in Michigan for a 3-year evaluation of survival, vigor, plant height and width, disease resistance, and flower abundance. Vintage germplasm (accession 9084126) was tested in field plantings and Plant Materials Program Inter-Center evaluations for survival, height, spread, and fruit abundance. Seed germination procedures were also developed for this accession. Vintage germplasm was selected for release due to its excellent growth

characteristics, fruit production, and ability to regrow after cutting.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Vintage germplasm common elderberry is a selection of naturally occurring germplasm and has been unaltered. Vintage germplasm did not meet the assessment of a plant which could become invasive based on the environmental evaluation process adopted by the NRCS Plant Materials Program.

Anticipated Conservation Use

Vintage germplasm common elderberry is intended for use in streambank and shoreline stabilization as an alternative to introduced plant species. It can be used for enhancement of riparian corridors and provide food and shelter for wildlife.



Anticipated Area of Adaptation

The anticipated area of use of Vintage germplasm is within the Great Lakes region and upper mid-west United States, which is well within the species range. Vintage germplasm inhabits well drained soils near streams, and in adjacent bottomlands. It also grows well on gray forest soils and muck.



Availability of Plant Materials

Generation 1 (G1), equivalent to Foundation Seed, will be maintained by the USDA NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI and is available in limited quantities to interested parties for increase purposes.

For More Information

Visit our Plant-Materials website to find more information on using plants to solve conservation problems.

<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

**USDA-NRCS
Rose Lake Plant Materials Center
7472 Stoll Road
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone (517) 641-6300
Fax (517) 641-4421**

**Plant Materials Specialist
(517) 641-7831**



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