



***Sambucus pubens* – Red Elderberry**

COMMON NAME: Red Elderberry, Red-berried Elder

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Sambucus pubens* (*sambus* is derived from the Greek *sambuca* which was a stringed instrument supposed to have been made from elder wood). This plant is sometimes listed as *Sambucus racemosa subsp. pubens*.

FLOWER: Large clusters of small white flowers. These clusters are elongated whereas the well-known “elderberry” with black fruits has a flat flower cluster.

BLOOMING PERIOD: June

SIZE: 5 to 12 feet tall and just as wide

BEHAVIOR: Upright shrub with a vase shape. Can be used as an accent plant, in a shrub border or hedge.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: This shrub prefers rich rocky soils with ample moisture, growing on rocky banks, in ravines, woods and clearings. Grows well in full sun to full shade and can be planted under large trees.

NATURAL RANGE: Found throughout Wisconsin, but less common in the southern part of the state.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Flowers attract butterflies and other insects. This shrub is very important for many birds. The clusters of red fruit ripen just about the same time that baby birds need them in late June/early July. Please note that this is not the elderberry plant whose berries are used for jams. Those berries turn black and these berries are red and must be cooked to be palatable. Dyes can be made from the bark, fruit, and stems, and an insecticide from the dried leaves.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water regularly the first year or two after planting. Once it is established, cultivate around it carefully, as the root system is shallow and can be easily damaged. It should be pruned regularly in late winter.

COMPANION PLANTS: White pine, quaking aspen, winterberry.