

How to Root Elderberry Cuttings

Norm's Farms carefully creates our elderberry cuttings from 1st and 2nd year wood in the winter after the elderberries have lost all of their leaves and are fully dormant. Each cutting is made in the same way with the slope cut located at the "rooting end" of the cutting and the flat cut at the "leafing end" of the cutting. Each of our cuttings has at least two node pairs as well. These node pairs will produce roots and new elderberry shoots below ground and leaves above.

Norm's Farms cuttings are shipped between January 1st and March 30th of each year. When you receive your cuttings you'll need a few supplies to root them, and, if you wish to root them directly in the ground, you'll need to have prepared a small garden bed to receive them. **Elderberries root best in cold to cool weather outdoors**, and typically take 8 to 10 weeks to develop enough roots to allow them to be transplanted.

Supplies Needed:

To get your cuttings rooted you will need the following supplies:

1. Rooting hormone or rooting stimulant, like [Rootone](#), Super Thrive, [honey](#), or [willow bark](#).
2. Large pots or a prepared garden bed.
3. Soil-less potting medium like coarse sand, regular potting mix, coconut coir, or blends such as a mixture of one part peat and one part Perlite (by volume), or one part peat and one part sand (by volume).
4. A spade, if you are planning on starting your cuttings outdoors in the ground.



Elderberry Cuttings are propagated following typical hard wood propagation techniques. When you receive your cuttings the first thing you want to do is soak them in well water or distilled water for 24 hours. Fill a large glass container like a canning jar with the well water or distilled water and place your cuttings half way in the water, angle side

down. Place the jar in a cool location away from direct sunlight and let sit for 24 hours. After the 24 hour soak period it's time to prepare the cuttings for planting.

Remove the cuttings from the container of well or distilled water, and place them on a paper towel to air dry for a couple of minutes. Empty a small amount of rooting hormone into a clean bowl. Dust the angled end of the cutting with rooting hormone, and tap the cutting against the side of the bowl to remove the excess rooting hormone. Rooting stimulant gels also work well.



Using Rooting hormone helps prevent fungus and bacteria from infecting your cutting and helps speed the rooting process. Most commercially available rooting hormone products contain a synthetic version of a class of plant hormones called auxins. These synthetic hormones are called IBA or NAA. Due to their synthetic nature, IBA and NAA are not approved for use in certified organic crop production. However, many gardeners and farmers—who lean organic, but choose not to be certified—use IBA and NAA, believing that these chemicals do not negatively affect the quality of their produce. If you want to use only natural products, both [honey](#) and [willow bark water](#) are reported to work well as a rooting stimulant.

Fill a large container with a soil-less potting mix and using your clean index finger or a pencil, create a hole in the potting mix into which you will insert the cutting. Doing so helps to insure that you won't knock off too much of the rooting hormone when you plant your cuttings.

Plant up to three cuttings in each large pot by carefully inserting the angled end dusted with rooting hormone into the soil-less potting medium. Be sure to leave the top nodes located near the flat end of the cutting exposed as this is where the new elderberry plant will develop leaves.

Water well until the soil-less medium is soaked through. If you live in a place that experiences mild to moderate winters **the best place for your elderberry cuttings is outdoors** in a sheltered and shady spot. The shelter and shade will prevent the rooting cuttings from drying out due to too much sun or wind, and the cool winter air provides the best rooting environment possible by encouraging root growth rather than leaf growth. For added insurance, heal the potted cuttings into the surrounding soil or mulch bed. Direct jabbing the cuttings into a prepared garden bed is also a great way to root your cuttings.