



Elderberry is an exciting crop being researched at the University of Missouri Southwest Center, Mt. Vernon, Mo., where many agroforestry-related studies are underway. Elderberry, or *Sambucus canadensis*, is a native Missouri crop and is part of the honeysuckle family. Elderberry is a multi-stemmed shrub that fruits on old and new wood. The berries have been used in medicinal products for years, and also can be found in wine and jelly, for example. At the Southwest Center, research is looking at elderberry pruning treatments and cultivar performance, among other studies.

PRUNING TECHNIQUES

Elderberry pruning is laborious and costly. Considering the labor involved with selective pruning, studies are showing that pruning to the ground every other year may be an excellent, cost-effective way to manage the elderberry plant, thereby keeping it vigorous and productive.

The elderberry pruning research looked at two growing locations, three cultivars and four pruning treatments over five years.

Annual pruning may have other important advantages, however. For example, even though research shows annual pruning yielded less overall, such a pruning management method might improve predictability and uniformity of ripening. Researchers also believed annual pruning might reduce erlophyid mite and bacterial leafspot infestation because of the annual removal of infested branches, but data did not support this concept.

CULTIVARS: COMING SOON!

UMCA researchers plan to release two new elderberry cultivars in 2008 ("Wyldewood" and "Bob Gordon"), while continuing to evaluate more than 60 cultivars. A soil fertility and plant nutrition study will be established in '08.

Cultivar 'Gordon B' had a larger berry and yielded nearly triple that of 'Adams 2,' probably the most common elderberry cultivar in production today. These yield results are across five years, two locations and all four pruning treatments, so researchers are confident Gordon B is a truly superior cultivar for the Midwest. Elderberry plants at Mountain Grove, Mo., yielded higher than those at Mt. Vernon. Researchers do not entirely understand why, but the plants at Mountain Grove were established on raised soil ridges, which may have important benefits for elderberry.

MARKETING STUDY UNDERWAY IN 2008

UMCA's socio/economic/marketing cluster is launching an elderberry marketing study in 2008. The focus will be on gaining understanding of the size and scope of the national elderberry market and the competitive forces that impact the market from both the producer and consumer perspectives.

Elderberry:

Versatile Native Crop

Berry can be used in...

Wine

Jelly

Syrup

Chocolate & fudge

Food coloring

Medicinal products

Wildlife plantings

Ornamental plantings

Riparian plantings