



'Wyldeewood,' First Release from Elderberry Improvement Project

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SPRINGFIELD, MO—The American elderberry is showing promise as a profitable commercial fruit crop. Traditionally used for making jelly, juice, and wine, elderberry is becoming increasingly important in North America's burgeoning "nutraceutical" industry. Historically, elderberries have mostly been harvested from the wild; researchers have recently made efforts to select or develop improved cultivars. Increased interest and emerging markets are encouraging scientists to develop improved elderberry cultivars that yield consistent, superior production. Scientists from the University of Missouri have introduced a new variety named 'Wyldeewood', a tall, vigorous elderberry plant that consistently produces heavy yields, is efficient to harvest, and produces fruit well-suited for processing.

The Elderberry Improvement Project was initiated at Missouri State University and the University of Missouri in 1997 with the goal of developing American elderberry cultivars adapted to Midwestern environments. 'Wyldeewood' is the first cultivar released from the program. Originally described and tested as 'Brush Hills 1' and 'Wyldeewood 1', the new release was identified and collected from the wild by Jack Millican in 1995 near the community of Brush Hill, Oklahoma. The cultivar was named in honor of Wyldeewood Cellars Winery of Mulvane, Kansas, a leading promoter of elderberry production in the Midwest and a supporter of the Elderberry Improvement Project. 'Wyldeewood' was tested and observed beginning in 1998 at two locations in southern Missouri.

According to corresponding author Patrick L. Byers of the University of Missouri Cooperative Extension Service in Springfield, 'Wyldeewood' outperformed the standard 'Adams II' elderberry in yield potential and berry size; 'Wyldeewood' berry weights ranged from a low of 52 mg to a high of 111 mg. The harvest season for 'Wyldeewood' is generally 14 to 26 days later than the standard 'Adams II', with harvest usually beginning in late July in Missouri.

A limited number of unrooted cuttings of 'Wyldeewood' are available for test purposes to federal and state experiment stations from University of Missouri and Missouri State University by contacting the authors.