

# *Sambucus nigra* *ssp. canadensis*



## black elderberry

|          |                |     |   |
|----------|----------------|-----|---|
| Family   | Caprifoliaceae |     |   |
| Origin   | Native         |     |   |
| WIS Code | FAC            | CoC | 4 |

### DESCRIPTION

Shrub with multiple thin arching stems (to 7.5 cm diameter), sometimes forming colonies via rhizomes (underground stems). Twigs are hairless, yellow-green becoming brownish-gray with large lenticels (pores) and a white pith (porous tissue inside the twigs and stems). Leaves are compound, opposite with typically seven leaflets. Leaflets are lance-shaped to elliptic (5 to 11 cm long), with a pointed tip, finely-toothed margins and mostly smooth with hairs along the veins.



© Don Sutherland



© Rosanna Springston



© Dana Boyle

### FLOWERS AND FRUITS

May to July, August to September. Flower heads, at the stem tips, are dome-shaped to flat branched clusters (5 to 20 cm across). Flower stalks are green and turn to purple when in fruit, and flowers are white with five rounded petals. Fruits are berry-like (drupes), fleshy, purple to black and containing a single seed. The stems arch and bend over under the weight of the fruiting heads.

### HABITAT

Floodplain forests, swamps, wet meadows, stream banks, and roadside ditches.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

*Sambucus racemosa*, red elderberry, is found primarily in moist woodlands, has red fruits (not black or purple) and the pith of stems and branches is light brown (not white).



*Sambucus racemosa*

© Peter M. Dziuk