



# ELDER

*Sambucus nigra / canadensis*



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Supporting your journey to wellness

# History & Folklore

- Elder is truly an ancient herb, with archeological evidence elder was consumed thousands of years ago
- Long a staple of folk medicine, called the “people’s medicine chest”, and it has copious folklore surrounding it from Europe and the UK.
- Many folktales associate Elder with the otherworld and it was highly respected
  - ❖ warnings not to fall asleep under an elder tree
  - ❖ Never burn or use its wood without asking permission from the ‘Elder Mother’
- In Harry Potter, the most powerful and revered wand was made of Elder!



The ELDER FLOWER Fairy

# Growing and harvesting

- Elder grows in most places across the world, often forming clumps and hedgerows
- In cool climates Elder are deciduous.
- The trees grow easily on the Sunshine Coast and only partially die back over winter.
- We are often lucky enough to get several flushes of both the flowers and berries every year.
- Elder easily strikes from a cutting and can be invasive, so caution is advised regarding where it is planted.





# Harvesting

- Harvest flowers when most of the blooms are open.
- Shake out tiny white spiders and bugs!
- Harvest berries when dark purple/ black.
- Separate from stems and discard any unripe fruit.



# Medicinal Actions

- Elderberries are most famous for their ability to shorten duration and symptoms of the flu – both traditional use and backed by modern science as well as being used as a cough syrup.
- Elderflowers can also be used for their immunomodulating and antiviral properties, although are most often used to relieve a fever through inducing sweating, as made infamous in the YEP (yarrow, elderflower and peppermint) formula.

# Berries

antiviral, immunomodulating, antioxidant rich, anti-inflammatory, diaphoretic, diuretic, aperient, expectorant, laxative



- Traditionally used to make tasty cough syrup
- Anthocyanins in the berries can attach to (and render ineffective) viral glycoproteins that enable viruses to enter host cells, thereby potentially having an inhibitory effect on viral infection.



# Cautions and Safety

- Raw elderberries are toxic in large doses.
- They can cause vomiting, nausea or diarrhea due to presence of cyanidin glycoside in seeds, but cooking neutralizes this toxin and makes it safe to consume the berries.



# Flowers



## Actions:

- antiviral, nervine,
- diaphoretic, diuretic,
- antioxidant rich,
- alterative
- anti-catarrhal, astringent
- emollient, demulcent,
- Traditionally used to make tea for fevers, colds, hayfever.
- Can be used fresh or dried.

# Recipes and ways to use Elder in daily life

Elderberries are a food-like herb and can be consumed in larger amounts (when cooked) and both flowers and berries can be used for both culinary and medicinal purposes.

- **Berries:** Syrup, oxymel, decoction, tincture, elixir, wine, jelly, scones, pies, cakes, muffins, jellies, jams, vinegars,
- **Flowers:** fritters, sorbet, cordial & fermented champagne/sparkling wine (due to natural yeasts)



