Black Beauty® Elder

Sambucus nigra 'Gerda'

Height: 12 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Common Elder

Description:

A wonderful color contrast shrub, with compound dark purple foliage that borders on true black, against which the soft pink flowers definitely stand out, a true garden accent; grows into a relatively large shrub and spreads, so needs regular attention



Black Beauty Elder foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Black Beauty Elder features showy clusters of fragrant shell pink flowers held atop the branches in early summer, which emerge from distinctive rose flower buds. It has attractive deep purple deciduous foliage. The serrated compound leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall color. The deep purple fruits are held in clusters in early fall.



Black Beauty Elder
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Black Beauty Elder is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a high maintenance shrub that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Black Beauty Elder is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Black Beauty Elder will grow to be about 12 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.