

Elder

Also known as elderberry

Sambucus nigra



Identification

- Small tree to 6 m
- Leaves are made up of 5 or 7 leaflets
- Dense clusters of white flowers from November to January
- Large clusters of shiny black berries (7 mm diameter) from late summer to early autumn



Elder bush Photo: C. Lewis



Elder berries Photo: Plant Protection Society

Where is it found?

Elder is found mainly on coastal and lowland areas, particularly along roadsides, amongst scrub and on forest margins.

Why is it a problem?

It can form dense thickets, displacing desirable plants. Elder is spread by birds so new plants can pop up some distance from the parent tree.

Control

Seedlings can be pulled out, but larger trees are more difficult to control. If cutting elderberry, treat the cut stump with herbicide to prevent it from re-sprouting. Various other methods can be used including drilling the trunk and filling with herbicide. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.



Elder flowers Photo: C. Lewis